Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Palackého

Bakalářská práce

2015 Tereza Kopřivová

Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Palackého

Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

Krátkodobá příprava na konferenční tlumočení

Short-Term Preparation for Conference Interpreting

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Olomouc *2015*

Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně a uvedla úplný seznam citované a použité literatury.

V Olomouci dne 17. 8. 2015 ....

Na tomto místě chci poděkovat své vedoucí za milé vedení a cenné připomínky při tvorbě práce. Dále bych chtěla poděkovat studentům, kteří spolupracovali na výzkumné části. V neposlední řadě děkuji své rodině a blízkým, kteří mi byli nejen po dobu psaní práce oporou a příjemným rozptýlením.

List of abbreviations

AIIC – The International Association of Conference Interpreters

ATP – English for Translators and Interpreters

KAA – Department of English and American Studies at Palacký University

SCIC – The Directorate General for Interpretation

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1 Introduction

There are many ways in which an interpreter can successfully prepare for an interpreting assignment, namely by means of acquiring and processing background documents. The thesis will describe the ways that are given by professional interpreters in the **theoretical part**. In the second part of the thesis, there is a **survey** which will attempt to discern whether novice interpreters of the English for Translators and Interpreters study program (ATP) at the Department of English and American Studies at Palacký University (KAA) do use any of the recommended techniques and strategies during their preparation for their hands-on training assignments.

The aim of this thesis is to compile and critically assess various advice concerning preparation for interpreting that can be found in literature and consequently to evaluate whether novice interpreters (ATP students) follow any of this advice.

In the first part of the thesis, I look at the background theory behind interpreting and I explain what the process consists of. I also briefly describe the **participants in the interpreting process** – the client, a language agency, the speaker, the interpreter and the listeners – and how they can affect the outcome of an interpreting event.

Then I look at the **cognitive[1] aspect** of interpreting. The leading researcher in this field is the French interpreter, translator and mathematician **Daniel Gile**. I will refer to his work throughout this thesis, because over the time he spent by research he has addressed many issues that are related to the topic of this thesis. Gile's **effort model** explains why interpreting is such a cognitively demanding activity and consequently why it is almost impossible to perform well without preparation.

Subsequently, a chapter is dedicated to the **long-term preparation** of interpreters, which does refer to **university studies**, but also to **lifelong learning** and maintaining solid general knowledge.

Short-term preparation for an interpreting assignment will then be described in great detail with special focus on **work with sources**. I compiled observations and recommendations from professional interpreters and other relevant sources regarding the

[1] Cognitive = relating to the mental processes of perception, memory, judgment, and reasoning, as contrasted with emotional and volitional processes. (Dictionary.com)

process and methods. I then classified the sources that could be used for preparation for an interpreting assignment according to different criteria.

Subsequently, I explain how to find these materials, especially on the internet. I give some useful tips for **using search engines**, mostly regarding the use of so-called operators. Consequently, a chapter is dedicated to dealing with the materials found on the internet – how to evaluate their reliability and how to manage the documents. I also mention an alternative approach to studying the documents: **Mind Mapping**.

The theoretical part ends with a **chronological overview of the preparation process** and some additional tips are given for the individual stages: the advance preparation, on the spot preparation, and the post-conference follow-up.

The practical part consists of a **questionnaire survey** I carried out among students of English for Translators and Interpreters (ATP) at the Department of English and American Studies at Palacký University in Olomouc with practical experience with interpreting. The aim is to find out whether they employ the recommended strategies and methods when they prepare for an interpreting assignment.

2 Theoretical Background – Interpreting

In literature, there are many definitions of the various types of interpreting, each stressing some particular aspect of it. I have chosen the following definition from the AIIC (The International Association of Conference Interpreters), as it focuses on the process.

> In **simultaneous interpreting**, the interpreter sits in a booth, listens to the speaker in one language through headphones, and immediately speaks their interpretation into a microphone in another language. In **consecutive interpreting**, the interpreter is in the same room as the speaker and follows their speech while taking notes before presenting their interpretation. (AIIC 2012)

In another article on the AIIC website which deals with preparation for interpreting[2] we can learn that interpreting is more than transliterating the words one after another to a different language and that there are many more factors than just knowledge of the two languages that contribute to a successful interpretation – knowledge of the topic at hand, world knowledge, the ability to put individual pieces of information in context, rapid analysis, cohesion, correct terminology, etc.

Another definition stresses the instantaneity of the interpreting process:

> Interpreting is a form of translation in which a first and final rendition in another language is produced on the basis of a **one-time presentation of an utterance** in a source language. (Kade in Pöchhacker 2004, 11)

This instantaneity is a distinctive feature of interpreting and it affects the cognitive requirements for interpreting, which will be further discussed in *Chapter 3*.

2.1 Participants in the Interpreting Process

In an interpreting process, the following people are involved:

- The client, who may be an organizer of the conference who hires interpreters or in other cases, may be the speaker
- A language agency, which acts as intermediary between the client and interpreters
- A speaker who speaks to all present listeners

[2] The actual tips will be dealt with further on in this thesis. Tips on helping interpreters prepare for your meeting, AIIC, http://aiic.net/page/6533/tips-on-helping-interpreters-prepare-for-your-meeting/lang/1

- Source language listeners who understand the speaker and do not need the service of an interpreter
- An interpreter who transforms the original message so that target language listeners understand; there should also be one more interpreter who is listening while his colleague is interpreting
- Target language listeners, who do not understand the speaker and are dependent on the interpreting service

In the interpreting event itself, the following participants are present:

Speaker —> Source-language listener

Interpreter —> Target-language listener

Client

Figure 1: A communication model of interpretation (Gile 2009, 24)

The presence of an interpreter (and the fact that there are people who would not understand each other without the interpreter) has an effect on all of the participants and the situation as a whole.

Gile (2009, 24) says that in interpreting (as opposed to translation of written texts), the **participants**, i.e. the speaker(s) and the listeners are aware of the interactive nature of the communicative situation. They can even sometimes aid the interpreter, because they are aware of the communicative context of interpreting and it is in their own interest to communicate effectively.

Speakers might have different **aims and intentions**. There are three possible components in every speech or text: **informing, explaining, and persuading**. These components are based on Bühler's classification of text functions (see *Figure 2*). There is rarely only one distinct function present, but it is necessary that the interpreter knows which component prevails.

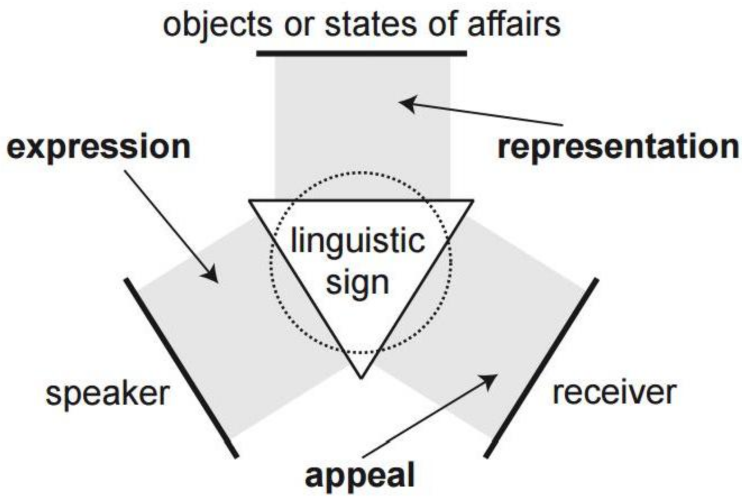

Figure 2: The organon model by Karl Bühler (1934), with its three language functions: expression, appeal, and representation. (Wachsmuth and Bujna 2011,2)

As Gile (2009, 28) states, the interpreter should act as the **speaker's alter ego**, even when the listeners do not like it. Interpreters have to shift their loyalty every time the speaker changes. However, there are situations in which interpreters tend to alter what the speaker says, for example when the speaker is rude, interpreters usually use less expressive vocabulary. The interpreter adjusts what they say according to the audience's needs.[3]

2.1.1 Issues Associated with the Participants

The client, the speaker(s) and the interpreter have **a common goal, which is to communicate the message to the audience**. This means they should collaborate in order to achieve this goal, which also means for the client or speaker to provide the agency or interpreter with the necessary documents.

Nevertheless, the other parties might have some reasons not to share the materials and thus to complicate the interpreter's preparation: Speakers sometimes feel too protective of what they want to say later and are afraid that some information or know-how might leak. They may also not have the final version of their presentation ready.

There might also be a hurdle on the part of the agency. The agencies may want to coerce the interpreters into buying their glossaries or dictionaries or they might simply not pay

[3] An entire thesis was dedicated to this topic: Modelling the Interpreting process: Focusing on the recipients' knowledge, Kluka Michal 2012

that much attention to a small order. Agencies may also fear they would lose the client if they provided the interpreter with the contact details of the speaker.

It is important that the stakeholders realize they are working together and not one against another. In case they do not realize this, the interpreters should adopt the role of educators and tactfully explain how the whole process works, why they need some documents in advance, and that even drafts can help them very much in the preparation. They can also remind the client that they are bound by confidentiality.

3 Cognition – Effort Model

The fact that there are always several processes going on at the same time (concomitance of speech acts) means that interpreting – especially simultaneous interpreting – is cognitively extremely demanding. According to the Merriam Webster dictionary,[4] cognition means “conscious mental activities: the activities of thinking, understanding, learning, and remembering.”

Thorough advance preparation helps reduce the cognitive load during interpreting; when the interpreter already knows what will be discussed and is familiar with the topic and the terminology, he or she is able to anticipate better what will come next and does not have to put that much energy into analysis and understanding the message and can focus more on the production, for example.

The development of Gile’s **effort model** (2009, 159-182) was inspired by the following ideas:

During interpreting, the interpreter divides his mental energy between listening and analysis, memory, production/reformulation and coordination effort (these efforts are explained below in greater detail). There is only limited supply of such mental energy. The subtasks sometimes require more energy than there is available at which time the performance deteriorates. The mental energy gets used up fairly quickly and that is why during simultaneous interpreting, interpreters take turns after 30 minutes to prevent overburdening.

Cognitive overload is a source of errors; other variables (such as fatigue, difficult content, and the professionalism of the interpreter) were eliminated. The premise was that any channel through which some information is transmitted may suffer from overload and when this happens, some information is lost.

Individual efforts consist of the following:

Listening and Analysis effort – speech recognition is not an automatic process and therefore it requires some conscious effort. It means making sense of the sounds we hear;

[4] merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cognition

not only the individual words, but also the meaning of sentences and whole utterances. It requires both linguistic and extralinguistic knowledge.

Production effort – occurs twice in consecutive interpreting; there is first the **production of notes** and then the **production of speech**. In simultaneous interpreting it encompasses mental representation of the message, speech planning and of course vocalizing the utterance. Interferences of the source language – its syntactic structures are not always plausible in the target language and there are false friends. Interpreters should translate the meaning of the message, not only the words.

Short-term memory effort – in simultaneous interpreting, this refers to remembering the information you hear until you say it. The interpreter has to wait until the utterance makes sense and then he or she translates it. In some cases, for example when the speaker has a strange accent or the structure of the speech lacks logical organization, this time (also referred to as lag) becomes longer and the memory effort increases.

Coordination effort – in simultaneous interpreting all the above mentioned areas need some attention all the time. However, one has to divide their attention accordingly, which is difficult especially when the pace or density of the speech is too high and also when long names and numbers occur (e.g. the interpreter focuses on the difficult segment and fails to produce the following segment correctly).

In order to overcome cognitive overload interpreters **practise individual components of the process** during their long-term preparation and they also devote considerable time and effort to short-term preparation.

4 Long-Term Preparation

In order to become professional interpreters people usually take a degree in a language or in interpreting. However, according to Gile (2009, 3), formal education is not mandatory and there are even some self-taught interpreters who received no formal education, and underwent only some in-house training.

4.1 University Studies

In most cases, in order to be eligible to do their job professionally,[5] interpreters undergo some kind of training, in other words, long-term preparation, during which they adopt the general skills, competences, techniques and habits needed for interpreting and interpreting methodology.

Apart from mastering the methods of interpretation, they must also have a good command of their active and passive languages and have adequate knowledge of the matters they interpret and wide world knowledge. These components may also be included in their syllabi (Maillot in Gile 2009, 4).

Interpreters are trained at a number of universities in and outside Europe, according to the SCIC site[6] most of the courses are postgraduate, however, in the Czech Republic there are also undergraduate interpreting courses available.

The time a student spends at a university learning how to become an interpreter varies greatly and according to Gile (2009, 6), the approximate average is 2-4 years.

4.2 Lifelong Learning

After interpreters leave the training institution, they are not formally obliged to deepen their theoretical or methodological knowledge. Even so, many of them voluntarily take part in lifelong learning; for example by adding new languages to their portfolio. Nevertheless, they always need to prepare for every individual assignment, which can also be considered as a part of lifelong learning.

[5] There are also non-professional versions of interpreting such as interpreting for your relative during holidays abroad.
[6] http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/scic/become-an-interpreter/want-to-become-interpreter/index_en.htm

Professional associations publish newsletters,[7] magazines or publish articles on their websites to keep their members up to date with developments in the field. Some organizations offer additional courses (e.g. legal or business English, legislature, CAT tools).

Members of certain institutions are required to engage in lifelong learning, for example members of SCIC. "DG Interpretation encourages its staff interpreters to learn new languages and arranges language courses during working hours for priority languages." (European Commision 2014)

On the web, there is a plethora of other interesting sources such as Khan Academy or Coursera[8] which provide free online courses in various subjects and areas.

[7] E.g. JTP – ToP magazine
[8] Khanacademy.org, Coursera.org

5 General Knowledge

Interpreters should also have a solid general knowledge, which is also referred to as *world knowledge* by Andrew Gillies (2013, 43) and *general culture* by Jean Herbert (1952, 20).[9] Herbert claims that interpreters should have "extremely wide general culture."

Having a good general knowledge means being aware of **current socio-political affairs**, knowing **history, culture**, **law** and other areas that may either come up directly or indirectly. Interpreters should not be taken aback by cultural references or sudden changes of subject during, for example, a corporate meeting (Herbert 1952, 21).

Gillies (2013, 43) points out that not knowing a word in a foreign language is considered a vocabulary issue, however, not knowing a word in one's mother tongue is rather a shortfall in their general knowledge.

He also says that having a broad general knowledge frees up the mental capacity, which can then be used for other cognitively demanding activities in interpreting.

5.1.1 How to Boost General Knowledge

Technology can help interpreters a great deal with keeping up with current affairs. They can follow or **subscribe to newspapers on social media** which is much more comfortable than buying and reading the hard copy, and it will encourage them to at least read the headlines, or watch educational videos (some of them make great use of the visuals and nicely describe complicated concepts or mechanisms). There are also various podcasts thanks to which one can listen to the news in various languages. Another option is to take **quizzes**, either online or via smart phone applications.

General knowledge is also widened every time an interpreter is preparing for an assignment, either in-class or in real life. Nevertheless, isolated knowledge – a specialized chunk of information learnt for a one-off event – tends to be forgotten more easily.

In order to store knowledge effectively, it would be ideal to build up world knowledge systematically. However, the nature of work of interpreters (with an exception of in-house

[9] Jean Herbert is the author of one of the first learning resources for interpreters: Handbook forInterpeters. He was also one of the pioneers of conference interpreting. Among other notable activities, he helped to establish the United Nations interpretation service in New York and became its chief-interpreter.

interpreters who work for a single client) does not allow them to do this as they work on various topics which usually do not have very much in common.[10]

There are scholarly journals[11] and magazines of professional associations[12] and blogs which can also be used for keeping up to date with current trends or research.

Nevertheless, the basic pre-requisite for complying with this rather abstract requisite is to **have a curious mind** and to enjoy learning new things all the time. This process is never over, so it is better when the interpreter actually likes it.

[10] Topics of conferences of Valerie Taylor Bouladon (2011, 96) over a three month period illustrate this variety: standardization of synthetic fibre, sexual abnormalities of the newborn child, radiocommunications, metallurgy, tick-borne encephalitis, forestry, orthopaedic surgery and anaesthesiology, calibration of eggs, telephony – automatic switching systems, cancer research, cardiology, telephony and the creosoting of telegraph poles, communicable diseases, breastfeeding and cloning of rabbits.

[11] https://benjamins.com/#catalog/journals/intp/main, http://www.erudit.org/revue/meta/2014/v59/n3/index.html, http://cirinandgile.com/,

[12] AIIC webzine http://aiic.net/webzine/

6 Short-Term Preparation

In this chapter I will synthesize what some authoritative sources say about conference interpreting preparation with an emphasis on the compilation of a glossary. First, I will look at the general practical aspects and the background theory.

The aim of preparation is for the interpreter to acquire **adequate knowledge** of the topic under discussion, so that he or she can intelligently analyze what he or she hears and interpret the meaning accurately into the target language (Seleskovitch 1978, 53).

She (ibid, 56) also states that the interpreter should have an analytical mind and **quickly assimilate new knowledge**. It is not possible for the interpreter to have the same level of knowledge as the speaker, but he should have a similar level of intellectual ability.

The new knowledge is both of the subject matter and of the related terminology and these two components are inevitably intertwined. It is therefore difficult to clearly distinguish between them.

New knowledge is acquired by means of “scanning conference and other documents for useful terminological information and then storing and organizing data in a way that will ultimately facilitate the retrieval of relevant information in an efficient manner which suits the individual interpreter’s working context.” Bilgen (2009, 18)

Daniel Gile (2009, 131) describes this process of finding new information as **knowledge acquisition** in which the newly acquired knowledge is combined with the already existing **knowledge base**. He also points out that the interpreters gather this knowledge in a very different way from translators; the interpreters usually have to carry out all of their research before the assignment, whereas translators carry out their research during the assignment.

The time and effort an interpreter spends on preparing for a particular assignment then depends on how much they already know about the subject and how much there is still to learn in order to obtain adequate knowledge. In some cases, they will have to familiarize themselves with a completely new topic area, grasp the key concepts, undertake rather extensive research and compile a long glossary, but the next time they work on a similar assignment, the effort they need to invest in the preparation will be significantly smaller.

With reference to the overall task, Pöchacker (2004, 132) distinguishes between **on-line strategies** during the actual interpreting, such as anticipation, compression or reformulation, and **off-line strategies** preceding or following translational cognitive processing as such (e.g. preparing glossaries or marking up documents). All of these strategies allow the interpreter to successfully cope with the demanding process of interpreting. The off-line strategies will be dealt with throughout this thesis, but the on-line strategies are beyond its scope.[13]

6.1 Glossary

A glossary, by definition of the Macmillan dictionary, is: "a list of the difficult words used in a piece of writing or subject, with explanations of their meaning." However, in the context of interpreting, it is much more. It is an ultimate professional "cheat sheet" that helps interpreters to quickly transfer the requested lexical item into the target language.

During the preparation phase, the interpreter familiarizes himself with the topic and simultaneously creates the glossary. The interpreter first has to acquire the necessary documents, and then study them and on that basis compile a glossary. At the end of this process, there should be new information stored in the interpreter's memory and also physically in the glossary (printed, handwritten or on screen).

As Taylor-Bouladon (2011, 94) recommends, interpreter's **glossary should include** key words, academic and other titles, proper names of committees, officials, cities etc., numbers, dates, acronyms and abbreviations,[14] pronunciation remarks, genuinely new terminology, but also words or phrases that are likely to come up often or that the interpreter might not easily recall.

These items should be included, because the glossary serves as a **physical support of the interpreter's memory** and it should help them to quickly find a piece of information.
For **easy navigation**, Taylor-Bouladon (2011, 92) recommends keeping the different categories on separate sheets of paper for easy navigation in the booth. Furthermore,

[13] For further reading on the topic of on-line strategies read Franz Pöchacker's *Introducing Interpreting Studies*, chapter 6 – Process.
[14] Names of positions, bodies within and organization can be very tricky, because the same position or body can be differently in different companies. Similarly, acronyms can be tricky, because the same cluster of letters may refer to different entities (Taylor-Bouladon 2011, 92).

glossaries should not be too long, because then it would be more difficult to find the term or word one is looking for.

For purposes of preparation and glossary production, the interpreter uses whatever documents were made available to him, but depending on the nature of the assignment, the interpreter should also look for other information sources.

6.1.1 Technological Solutions

There has been ongoing debate on computerized terminology management for interpreters since the early 90s. The pioneers of this debate were Daniel Gile – La terminotique en interprétation de conférence : un potentiel à exploiter (1987) and Barbara Moser-Mercer – Banking on Terminology; Conference Interpreters in the Electronic Age (1992). In these articles, they point out the new possibilities that computers bring to interpreters and discuss how to make best use of them for interpreters' terminology needs.¨

Gile (1987) says that even though then computers were too big, too slow and too expensive compared to a hard copy of a dictionary, the time will come when computers will store terminology more effectively, they will become more portable and they will help the interpreters inside the booth. He points out that using computers in general saves a lot of time – one does not have to turn pages of a book all the time and it is easy to sort terms alphabetically and these are then easier to find. He saw another time-saving feature and a collective advantage in the possibility of collaboration and glossary sharing with colleagues creating networks. His predictions were fulfilled and in the modern age interpreters use computers every day.

Moser-Mercer (1992) points out that there is a great difference between the terminological work of translators, terminologists and interpreters. She surveyed AIIC interpreters to determine whether and how they use computers for their work and what kind of features should be included in terminological software for interpreters. She describes two tools that could be useful for interpreters, but that are mainly suitable for translators. She stresses the need for developing a specialized terminological tool for interpreters. Some of the features missing were multiple languages per glossary, and the inclusion of non-Latin characters (Unicode compatibility).

Since the publication of the article, the market has come up with multiple possibilities for the format in which to store the glossary on a computer (or other device) and there is also more attention given to this topic in literature (Will 2007, Bilgen 2009, Costa et al. 2014).

There are multiple ways of storing glossaries: on paper, in a Word or Excel document, in specialized software or in a database. The individual options and their advantages and disadvantages are described below.

6.1.2 Ms Excel

The easiest, cheapest option which does not require any advanced IT knowledge and is readily available to vast majority of computer users is using a **MS Excel Spreadsheet**.[15] The interpreter can easily share it with almost anyone; it is accessible on most devices (not only computers, but also smartphones or tablets). It is possible to sort items alphabetically or to possibly connect the glossary with a translation term base. The main drawback is that there are no special features.

6.1.3 Specially Designed Software

Another option is to buy **software specially designed** to cater for the needs of interpreters. In general, specialized programs are more user friendly, easier to navigate and more intuitive. Different ones have different features such as meta search, multilingual glossaries, document management, import or export to other formats (e.g. MS Excel, MS Word, plain text), study mode, more glossaries open at a time, regular updates, metadata information (e.g. context, part of speech, URL), an option to add pictures, dictionary management, advanced search options within the glossary, configurable display (font size, background color), and drag and drop functionality.

The parameters of evaluation were the following: whether the software can handle multiple glossaries open at a time, the number of possible working languages, the number of languages per glossary allowed, the number of descriptive fields, whether it can handle documents, whether it has Unicode compatibility (can handle non-latin characters), what formats it imports from and exports to, whether there is embedded online search for translation candidates, how many languages it supports, the possibility of remote glossary

[15] As suggested by the AIIC article Do your glossaries excel? (Fleming 2009)

exchange, available documentation, availability, platform dependence and the last slot was open for any other relevant features.

The study compared SDL Trados Multiterm Desktop, Intragloss, InterpretBank, Interplex UE, AnyLexic, Lingo, UniLex, The Interpreter's Wizard[16] and generally recommended **SDL Trados Multiterm Desktop**. However, different interpreters have different priorities, so before purchasing it is certainly good to read the whole article and possibly try the trial versions. The main drawback of these tools is their price and perhaps sharing options across devices with different operating systems, as most of them, are platform dependent (they can either run on Mac OS or Windows).

6.1.4 Personalized Database

Another possibility of glossary management is to create one's **own database** by defining the parameters that are important to them.[17] Possibly the biggest obstacle one might face is not being able to put the time and effort into creating one.

6.1.5 Sheet of Paper

Handwritten copies of a glossary or **Mind Maps** may be still the most comfortable and natural format for some interpreters. They might opt for this format for example because they want to avoid eye fatigue that is caused by staring at screens. When the handwriting is legible, it is easier to find what one is looking for.

However, it is also possible to print out a copy of a glossary that was compiled in an electronic format and electronic document are much easier to store and find after some period of time. Such a format is not very suitable for sharing with colleagues. Another drawback might be internal access – it is easier to find individual terms in an electronic document, because it is possible to use the find function.

[16] Official websites: www.interpretershelp.com; www.intragloss.com; www.interpretbank.de; www.fourwillows.com; www.sdl.com/products/sdl-multiterm/desktop.html; www.anylexic.com; www.lexicool.com/soft_lingo2.asp; www.acolada.de/unilex.htm; www.the-interpreters-wizard.topapp.net

[17] For more information read the M.A. dissertation "Investigating Terminology Management for Conference Interpreters." Baris Bilgen (2009)

7 Types of Sources

In this chapter I will divide sources into categories according to their relevance to the assignment.

7.1 Conference Documents

As Gile (2009, 147) says, conference documents have a strong link with what will actually be said. Therefore, these primary (or authentic) documents are the most important ones, because they are **highly relevant** and should be available to the interpreter at least two weeks before the conference. Once they are available, the interpreter should spend the majority of their preparation time on them.

Conference documents typically include a program or agenda, background papers on the subjects and organizations involved, documents to be discussed, texts of speeches to be delivered, PowerPoint presentations and the speakers' notes, multilingual glossaries of the relevant terminology, summaries or minutes of previous meetings, lists of speakers and delegates' and speakers' biographies.

The importance of these materials is also evident from the AIIC (2015) working conditions stipulated in their Code of professional ethics, that:

> With a view to ensuring the best quality interpretation, members of the Association:
>
> ... shall require that working documents and texts to be read out at the conference be sent to them in advance;
>
> shall request a briefing session whenever appropriate.

7.2 Background or Secondary Material

Sometimes, the primary documents suffice for interpreter's preparation and they do not need to search for background material and sometimes the material provided by the Client is not sufficient for acquiring the adequate knowledge which is necessary for the assignment. The interpreter then has to search for other background material on their own.

The so called **parallel texts** deal with the same or similar issues, which are considered also relevant material, and may include annual reports, stock exchange bulletins, financial statements, official web pages, specialized magazines, reference books, scientific articles or various documents produced by the EU or other organizations.

7.2.1 Web and Other Sources

The Internet is undoubtedly a very powerful tool and I will describe how to use it for preparation in *Chapter 8*. Nonetheless, we should keep in mind that the internet cannot possibly cover the totality of knowledge. Arguably, there is still a great amount of information and knowledge outside the internet, and therefore we still need other means of knowledge acquisition.

7.2.2 Printed Books

There is some overlap with the internet as books are now increasingly published both in the printed and electronic form. The knowledge contained in books only available in hard copy is certainly valuable and deserves to be used by interpreters. However, given the amount of literature and the frequency with which an interpreter usually consults a single source, it is better to use **libraries** rather than to purchase books that would be used for one occasion only.

7.2.3 Audiovisual Sources

It is said that a picture is worth a thousand words. Therefore audiovisual sources, i.e. pictures and videos can be sometimes of great value to the interpreter as they transmit information in a different way than in a written text. Watching a short video showing how a piece of equipment works or how an animal behaves is more efficient than spending time reading the description.

It is also advisable to look up the speaker’s videos – to see and hear them talking can help interpreters prepare so that they are not surprised by their accent or presentation style.

7.3 Terminological Sources

One should look for terminology everywhere: not just in the traditional terminological sources such as dictionaries, glossaries and terminology databases.

When searching for a terminological source, it is important to remember that the more languages or topics are involved, the more difficult it is to find enough experts to work on such a publication.

It is recommended to look at who published these sources and to be aware of the consequent limitations; Gile (2009, 140) warns that the commercial publishers build on previous ones – which are not always ideal and then some mistakes are replicated. On the other hand, terminology work issued by institutions such as EU or UN is done thoroughly, but more slowly.

This means that one should combine multiple terminological sources and check the meanings in a monolingual dictionary.

The first type of terminological source that comes to mind is **electronic dictionaries –** the good ones include explanations in the source language, translation in the target language, and some usage in context. It pays off to invest in at least one good electronic dictionary. Another feature of the electronic dictionaries which is very useful for interpreters is that you can listen to an audio recording of the correct pronunciation of the word.

Another invaluable source of terminological knowledge are **corpora**. They are large collections of written or spoken texts which are available on-line. Search results provide the context and collocations for requested words, plus there are search options that let you find these words in a specific context (e.g. a word followed by a particular part of speech). There are both monolingual and multilingual corpora. They can be used to find out which word or collocation is more common. Using corpora for this purpose is more reliable than using a search engine, because they contain texts sourced by native speakers. Another feature of corpora is that their content is selected according to specific criteria. Despite this, corpora may still contain some mistakes.

Furthermore, **multilingual sites** (such as **Wikipedia**) can also be used as terminological sources, especially when the articles at hand are different language versions of the same text, for example when the Czech article is a translation from the English original article. However, even when there are only few similarities between the texts and the structure of the articles is different; they can still be used for verifying names of historical figures, places or events. In general, Wikipedia and similar sites provide both linguistic and extralinguistic knowledge; however, information found there should always be checked with more sources.

There are also more and more **official websites** of companies, associations, and ministries. One disadvantage is that often when you are looking for some information, you navigate through various pages on the site, but when you switch the language, you go to homepage and not the page where you were. It is therefore good to remember the pathway to that specific page. Sometimes even the infrastructure of different language versions of the sites is different.

For example, at the site of the Czech ministry of interior, when you are looking for forms, in the Czech version, you will find them under: Služby pro veřejnost – Formuláře. When you click on the English version, you will be at the English homepage and the form can be found under: Useful information – Forms.[18]

7.4 Human Sources

Given the nature of people involved in the interpreting process, it is difficult to put them in only one category. Different participants in the interpreting process can fall into all of them: the speakers know what they will talk about, so they could be considered **primary sources**, colleagues – interpreters may be acquainted with the vocabulary – they could be considered **terminological sources**, speakers or colleagues or conference participants who know the subjects to be discussed in the conference can also serve as **sources of background knowledge**.

Gile (2009, 145) claims that it is better to first study the written (or audiovisual) materials to get a reasonable insight concerning the matter at hand and afterwards to consult the areas that are still unclear with experts in the field (e.g. the speakers themselves) or fellow interpreters or to ask questions during briefing sessions.

However, I think that if human sources are available at an earlier stage of preparation, they can give the interpreter a brief summary of what they need to know. If the interpreter is a complete beginner in a certain field and someone is able to tell them what it is about in a nutshell and the interpreter can ask questions immediately, it ameliorates one’s position for further research.

People who can give the interpreter some initial insight do not necessarily have to be experts in the field. What is more important is their capability for explaining the issue. These could be e.g. fellow interpreters who are familiar with the topic at hand.

[18] http://www.mvcr.cz/mvcren/

Question is how often this approach can be used– it depends largely on the availability of the suitable person, not being too shy, and their willingness to help.

For translators, Gile (2009, 145-6) even suggests institutionalizing consultations with experts i.e. hiring a personal consultant for a particular field. This is probably not viable for interpreting in the same form as he described it. However, interpreters have the advantage of having the experts on venue, so they can ask the speaker directly instead.

7.4.1 The Speaker

The speaker is one of the most precious sources of information and it is good to have the chance to communicate with the speaker and to ask them questions before the speech, either on the spot or beforehand via e-mail or other channels.

It is also good to have some idea of who the speaker is and to ask some questions about the speaker and the event and the speech they are going to deliver. Examples of questions concerning the speaker that interpreters should ask themselves are taken from Andrew Gillies website.[19]

- Who is the speaker?
- What is his nationality?
- What is his cultural background?
- What is his thought-world?
- What is he hoping to get out of the conference?
- What is the position of his government on this issue?

Source: Nolan 2005, 19

[19] http://interpreters.free.fr/preparation.htm

Publications	Has the speaker written anything on the topic before?	Are there any articles/books already published on the topic?	Does the location have anything to do with promoting literature on the topic?
Past appearances	Have you ever seen the speaker before?	Is the speaker linked to any special causes, events, etc.?	Where does the speaker generally voice his/her opinion?
Time	Will the speaker be alone or speak on a panel and how long will each person speak?	Is this a keynote speech? If so, will it be followed by a question and answer session?	Are the premises open all year round or do they house special events on a seasonal basis?
Place	Is the speaker in any way related to the place housing the event?	Will the location influence the speaker's words in any way?	Is the location to be commemorated by the speaker?
Occasion	Why has this person been chosen for this occasion?	Will the speaker make opening remarks, introductory statements, or closing remarks?	Is the occasion incidental or of relevance to the location?

Table 1:Questions about the speaker

Source: Monacelli 1999

8 Classification of Sources – Gile's Variables

I have chosen to build on Gile's classification of sources (2009, 133-141), because though it is primarily aimed as advice for translators, I find it quite convenient for interpreters as well.

Gile (2009, 131) defines knowledge required to undertake a translation/interpreting assignment as "high enough for translation but not high enough to act as an expert in the field". He adds that pre-existing knowledge can seldom suffice for interpreters to do their jobs properly. Hence, they always need to acquire some knowledge.

Although translators and interpreters both look for linguistic or terminological information and they both deal with stylistic and extralinguistic issues, their knowledge acquisition processes differ greatly. It is also because their working conditions, working methods and requirements for the quality of their output differ. Translators look for supporting documents during the actual translation and their products have to be of higher linguistic acceptability. Interpreters, on the other hand, usually carry out most of their preparatory work before the assignment, but they also update their glossaries during the assignment and after it.

Gile lists five major variables which determine whether a translator should use any given source; they are existence, external access, internal access, coverage, and reliability. However, despite the differences between the style of work of translators and interpreters, these variables can also be of use to interpreters.

8.1 Existence

Texts to be translated tend to relate to phenomena that have already reached some level of significance and therefore there should be information about it in more languages and at least some background sources exist. However, it takes a while until new terminological sources are available.

8.2 External Access

Once we know that the source exists we need to evaluate the time and financial costs of getting it.

This variable largely depends on the interpreter and their location and mobility. It is better to be in one of the countries where your working languages are spoken, because that usually makes access to language material easier. It is also beneficial to live in a larger university city where one can make use of libraries, bookstores or even find an expert in person.

8.3 Internal Access

Internal access means the effort or difficulties associated with finding the specific information within the source. It is determined by the way the information is organized, the quality of handwriting, print, sound, layout, and the table of contents.

This variable depends entirely on the source itself and its internal organization. Terminological sources are usually organized alphabetically and also encyclopedias and textbooks make it easy for their readers to find what they are looking for (e.g. when there are summaries of every chapter). Generally, the authors of these sources do not expect the reader to read from beginning to end, so they try to make it as user friendly as possible.

When looking up terms in a printed terminological source, it is beneficial to prepare source terms in alphabetical order, so that you do not have to turn pages back and forth all the time.

In a non-terminological book, a glance at the table of contents or index will give readers a good idea of how easy it will be to navigate. Some textbooks have glossaries at the end, which is also useful.

Thanks to the dissemination of electronic media, it is becoming increasingly easier to find information within electronic documents. The existence of the find function may seem like a small thing, but it helps to save a lot of time.

8.4 Coverage

This variable depends on what the interpreter already knows and what specific information he is looking for.

This is a highly subjective variable – it depends on the combination of the following two factors: the interpreter’s pre-existing knowledge and the information they are looking for, i.e. how much they already know and what they need to learn.

If the pre-existing knowledge is limited, many sources may be helpful. However, the more the interpreter already knows, the more difficult it is to acquire new information.

8.5 Reliability

We should distinguish between linguistic and extralinguistic reliability. The subject matter could be accurately described in inaccurate terms and vice versa. Reliability is a function of four variables:

First, its **author's command of the language in which it is written** – The best possibility is that it is written in one's mother tongue. If the text is already a translation, interpreters should approach it with caution.

Second is the **author's extralinguistic knowledge of the field**. If the text is written by a layperson (e.g. a journalist), then it is usually less reliable, but we should keep in mind that even experts have different levels of specialization.

Third is **the match between the source and the text being translated**, which perhaps is rather suitability than reliability. The interpreter should compare the communication situation (sender, audience, purpose) and see to what extent it overlaps with the document being translated.

Fourth is **time**. Some fields develop faster than others and are therefore more susceptible to becoming obsolete.

8.6 Chronology of the Sources

For translation, given that the product of translation should be a publishable text, Gile recommends using **starting-point sources**, **intermediate sources** and **end-point sources**. This might seem to be too time-consuming for systematic use in interpreting, but actually, we often find some information on a not too reliable or reputable place at first and then we have to check it through other sources. If there is a possible result displayed on an untrustworthy looking web page, we try to modify the search query or use a different search engine in order to get more confidence that the solution we found is plausible and reliable.

9 Searching the Internet

If we take a look at the internet in general from the point of view of Gile's variables, we can see that the internet as such is very convenient and useful – thanks to the ever increasing amount of content on the World Wide Web, electronic sources often suffice for an interpreter's preparation. A major asset of the internet is easy external access to a vast number of various documents that can be used as sources of information.

However, the more content there is on the web, the more difficult it is to find exactly what one is looking for, the more so if we are not precisely sure what it is. This means the internal access may constitute some difficulties.

Moreover, we should be wary when using internet sources and critically evaluate their reliability.

At present, **knowing how to look for information on the internet** and **knowing how to handle it** constitutes a set of key skills, not only for translators and interpreters, but for all internet users. In this chapter, I will treat these topics respectively.

9.1 Effective Search

I will summarize the most relevant recommendations for searching the internet and also within documents in a computer.

I feel this is a topic which is discussed very often on multiple occasions. There are dozens of web sources which provide information on how to search effectively. Despite this, a lot of people still do not use any modification.

It is good to know about the advanced search techniques in theory, but the crucial point is to incorporate them into one's search practice.

9.1.1 Search Engines

The tools used for web searching are called **search engines** – they search the web and allow us to find what we are looking for. They send robots called crawlers or spiders to go through the automatically generated indices. When they carry out the search, they do not search the internet, but their own copy of the internet – the indices. In the results, there may be more web pages from one website.

Examples of search engines are Google, Bing, Seznam, and Yahoo! We should keep in mind that none of them cover the entire internet; therefore it is good to combine them.

Pošta[20] (2012, 95) recommends using tools that will search multiple search engines simultaneously and provide all the results together. These are called **meta search engines** and they are for example Yippy, Dogpile or Excite.

9.1.2 Google Tips – Punctuation and Operators

If a group of words is entered into a search engine, it will look for pages that contain all the words, but the words need not occur in close proximity.

In almost every search, it is good to put a phrase or a specific sequence of words that are to appear in close proximity in **quotation marks** (” “) when looking for an exact phrase.

Minus (–) is a negative operator which will **exclude words** from the search. In some other search engines, the NOT operator has the same function (e.g. jaguar –car –automobile).

When looking for a **different language version** of some phrase originally in English, it is possible to search within the web pages of that language. For example, if you want to know whether a book was translated into Czech and if so what the name of the book in Czech was, you can look within the Czech national domain (e.g. site:.cz ”World Clock“ ” Nick Montfort “). This is usually more reliable than using automatic recognition of language.

The site operator may also be used when looking for content on a specific site, e.g. a university, encyclopedia or newspaper site.

The **OR** operator; as the name suggests, can be used when looking for either one of the possibilities – it is useful for example when there are two versions of the same name (transliteration from different alphabets – Chinese or Russian names). It can also be used with synonyms (Burma OR Myanmar).

Pošta (2012, 96) recommends to use **synonyms**: either by putting the OR operator between them, or by putting the tilde operator (~) in front of the word whose synonyms should be included in the search. Google will then also search for the term with alternative endings.

[20] Miroslav Pošta is a Czech translator, interpreter and subtitler and the author of a handbook for subtitling entitled Titulkujeme profesionálně. The handbook is very concise and covers all the practical aspects of subtitling profession.

Sometimes, it is very probable that the desired information is in a particular format. For example when looking for a thesis or a catalogue, the expected format would be.pdf and adding **filetype:**.pdf to the search query will limit the search result to documents in the pdf format.

Another useful feature for interpreters is the defining operator. If the term is a multiword expression, it must be put in quotation marks and Google will come up with results containing **definitions** from various dictionaries and encyclopedia (e.g. define:“Mind Mapping”).

These and other search options can also be found on the **advanced search page**.[21]

9.1.3 Other Tips

Pošta (2012, 101) recommends using **desktop search engines**. They work in a similar fashion as web search engines – they index the content of a computer (e.g. text files or e-mails) and then search the index when a query is entered. These tools, such as the Copernic Desktop Search, Yahoo Desktop Search, Windows Desktop Search or Blinkx can be downloaded free of charge from the internet.

Desktop search engines will enable you to search for a term in all the files on your computer simultaneously by highlighting the matches in a preview window without opening the files themselves.

Apart from using various search engines, in some cases it is highly advisable to search in specialized **databases**. Some of them are freely accessible; some can be accessed through university or another facility or institution, others require a subscription.
To name but a few: Google Scholar is a free database of scholarly publications, Eur-lex and IATE are multilingual databases by the European Union. In various databases results may be found that are otherwise inaccessible, plus the query may be specified even more.

9.2 Internet Reliability

When a source is found on the internet and it has adequate content, the next step before processing the source should be evaluating its reliability. Then the source can be classified as a starting point/ intermediary/end point source as mentioned in chapter Chronology of

[21] http://www.google.com/advanced_search

the Sources. We carry out some sort of analysis almost instantly and automatically; nonetheless, it is useful to mention some of the basic rules of researching on the internet and also to analyze sources consciously.

There is a comprehensive reference by the Lee College University entitled “How Can I Tell if a Website is Reliable?” the main ideas of which are summarized together with my observations below.

In order to answer the question whether that particular source can be trusted and used, a sequence of the following questions should be answered.

Who is the **author?** In a section called about the author/me, there should be information about their qualifications. It might be possible to Google the person, or find them on LinkedIn. If the author does not wish to reveal their identity, we should be critical. However, not being able to identify the author does not automatically mean the source is unreliable.

Who is the **publisher?** Web pages of a larger organization often do not credit the individuals who wrote some particular texts, but it is still quite clear on whose behalf it was written. The domain suffix is a quick identifier.[22]

Suffix	**Stands for**
com	Commercial
org	Non-commercial
edu	Educational
gov	Governmental

Table 2: An overview of the most commonly used web suffixes and their meanings

This is closely tied to the next question: What is its **purpose**? Is it simply to inform, or to advertise a product or an opinion? One should form some idea about this based on the three questions and thanks to them to overcome certain kind of bias. For example knowing that a

[22] If still in doubt, one can turn to http://whois.domaintools.com/ for some basic data about the site, its publisher and other information.

site comes from a company whose main objective is to sell its products should prevent internet users from perceiving the content as purely informative.

How timely is it? Some kinds of information are more prone to becoming outdated. In conference interpreting, time usually plays an important role, because at conferences, there are either new perspectives presented or downright novel ideas or discoveries proclaimed. It is usually easy to find the date of publishing or when a page was last modified (at the very top or bottom.

Does the site **cite their sources**? Citing properly and therefore conforming to academic rules is a sign of source's reliability. It means the author(s) of the page acknowledge the original author.

What other sites is it **linked** to? What sites link to it? Individual sites on the internet tend to be highly interconnected. If the close relations of the site have a bad reputation, it lowers the credibility of the site.

10 Managing Documents

It is highly recommended to keep track of documents and to keep them organized, because there might be a lot of them in the end and as it has been said before, interpreters should be able to find what they are looking for quickly. It pays off to devise a **sorting and naming system,** and to differentiate between different versions of the same document.

Interpreters seldom work on their own, which means very likely that they might need to cooperate with one or more other interpreters. Project management is beyond the scope of this thesis, however, I will comment on **file and document sharing**. When there is only one interpreter and their glossary, it is not so necessary to keep everything strictly organized, but once there are more people included, they should all follow some rules so as to avoid unnecessary complications, such as losing the latest version of a document, etc. It is good to use Google drive and Google docs or other **cloud-based solutions** that allow more people to work on one document simultaneously (which means everyone can see what the other participants are typing in real time).

In the very beginning, Taylor-Bouladon (2011, 91) recommends opening all newly received documents as soon as possible. It is good to do this even if there is not enough time to read through all of it – one can at least have a glance at the documents and estimate the difficulty of the texts and the time needed to process them.

It is better not to read carefully through the documents until they have been assessed as it is good to have priorities and to approach the preparation systematically.

11 Mind Mapping

Mind Mapping is a highly visual technique of arranging ideas or concepts and their relations on a single landscape sheet of paper. This technique may be used for learning, brainstorming, planning or decision-making and therefore it may also be used in different parts of the interpreting process. Mind Maps can be very useful for studying in the preparation stage, (Ondřeková 2013; Ala-Antti 2003, 27-43).

English psychology author and educational consultant **Tony Buzan** is the most prominent popularizer of modern Mind Mapping. His premise is that **human brain is a very powerful device** and the reason why we are disappointed by our brains is simply because we are not aware of **how they work**. If we understand how our brains function and change our learning style accordingly, we can achieve excellent results. Two basic features of both our brain and Mind Maps share are **imagination** and **association**. Mind Maps show individual concepts expressed as succinctly as possible and visually linked to each other, which is very different from the information expressed in the form of a written linear text.

Professional interpreters have also expressed their approval of Mind Maps in interpreting. Ivana Čeňková (2008, 90) says that though the mind-mapping technique is an unusual and alternative method, **it helps to improve strategies of perception, understanding, analysis and reformulation** of the interpreted speech or text. Furthermore, great emphasis is placed on using fewer words and more brain's memory.

Andrew Gillies (2005) agrees with Buzan that this form of expressing ideas helps the mind to **associate and recall information** and thus it helps to organize and remember information more effectively.

The following Mind Map clearly demonstrates what a Mind Map should look like; there is a key concept in the center, from which other concepts stem. The concepts that are nearest to the center are in larger letters than those further away. Mind Maps should be organized, ideally with only one word per line, they should be colorful, and whenever possible there should be also images.

Figure 3: Mind map of the mind map guidelines. (Nicoguaro, 2011)

As Buzan (2011) says: “It employs the full range of cortical skills: **word, image, number, logic, rhythm, color** and **spatial awareness** and thus involves multiple parts of your brain in the process.”

It is true that creating a mind map might take up a lot of time, especially when one is not familiar with the technique. However, the skill of creating a Mind Map can easily be learned and soon it takes much less effort and time. I think that using mind maps is most suitable in the case of highly abstract and complex speech because it makes you visualize the individual ideas and links between them and it provides a deeper understanding of what the speech is actually about. For simple speeches, however, Mind Maps might be superfluous.

12 Overview of the Process – Chronology

Preparation begins immediately after accepting an assignment. As the first step, Tony Buzan (2011) recommends creating **a time schedule**: you should visualize how much time you have and what you are going to do in that time.

The interpreter should ask the client for background or conference or any other relevant material. The “Practical guide for professional conference interpreters” published on the AIIC website (2012) lists another two main information sources: web pages and conference briefings.

Nolan (2005, 18), says that "Many speakers prepare their speeches well in advance of delivery and will gladly give or send a copy to an interpreter who takes the trouble to ask for it."

However, there are times when the interpreter has to send a lot of polite reminders before they succeed in getting any materials or sometimes they have to undertake all of the research on their own. Sometimes they get the documents upon their arrival at the venue. In such cases, it is advisable to arrive well ahead of time, so that there is a decent amount of time to study the materials. The problem is that interpreters usually do not know if there will be any documents at the venue. Nevertheless, it is always advisable to **come in advance**.

For corporate meetings, Taylor-Bouladon (2011, 115) recommends to go through the basic texts governing that company, so that the interpreter identifies with the overall corporate image of the company. It also serves the interpreter to familiarize himself with the particular format of the company’s meetings through the minutes or reports from past meetings. A similar approach may be adopted in the case of some conferences, provided that the conference keeps records of its past activities.

12.1 Advance Preparation

The first and longest part of preparation starts approximately **two weeks before** the conference or at the point when we know we will interpret it, and ends the night before the conference. It consists of working with sources in a thorough fashion. The interpreter first needs to acquire the sources, either from the client or through their own endeavour, and then to process these sources in order to acquire adequate knowledge (both linguistic and extralinguistic) and compile a glossary (source acquisition and processing are described in the chapters 6, 9, and 10).

12.2 On the Spot Preparation

I decided to put two Gile's (2009, 147-8) stages – Last minute and In-Conference together, because there is a significant overlap and it is difficult to distinguish between them.

There is so much that you can do once you arrive at the conference: all the speakers are available, there are the final versions of the documents, there are expert members of the audience, and there are other interpreters. The only problem is that there is no longer much time available.

12.2.1 Use of Technology

It is better to **bring a laptop**, even when you think you have got all the material you need, because there might be changes, for example if you printed a presentation and it was then updated in such a way that you can no longer use the printed version. Nevertheless, it is also good to print out the presentations or other documents and to note the translations of some difficult phrases or the pronunciation of difficult words.

Smartphones and **tablets** are more mobile, but you cannot connect a flash drive or use the kind of software you have on your laptop. Another problem with phones in the booth is that an incoming message can cause unpleasant sounds that are transmitted through the headphones to the listeners.

12.2.2 Team Work

Collaboration with colleagues (especially with booth mates) is very important. Conference interpreters seldom work alone; much more often they are a part of a team. If you know how to split the work between you (you can divide the material – who will process what, you can arrange the technicalities: one will bring the laptop, the other one will print the glossary...), you will work more efficiently.

When you arrive at the venue, **review the glossary with your colleagues,** possibly those from other booths as well.

In my experience, I have always compiled the glossary in close collaboration with my colleagues, so there was no need to go over the whole glossary again. Though if there were some difficult words or phrases for which we had several working options, we confirmed our final version on the spot.

Sometimes, the **speakers** know the language into which their speech will be interpreted, so they can clarify the uncertainty.

12.2.3 Briefings, Q&A Sessions

So far, I have only talked to the speakers when I had a specific question I needed to ask them, but I believe that organized meetings or sessions of interpreters and speakers are quite worthwhile as they can give the interpreter additional information which they have previously not expected.

12.2.4 Very Little Time – Tips

If there are longer pieces of text (such as quotations) that are likely to be read aloud and I do not have time to translate them, I just do one or two **mental sight translations** of that particular text and then when during the interpreting comes the time when the speaker reads it, I do not panic, because, I more or less still remember how to deal with that quote.

If the time constraints do not even allow for going through the whole presentation, it is recommended to **pay more attention to the final part** of the materials in order to leave at least a good last impression.

Finally, no matter what has happened before, when I enter the booth, I try to maintain a **positive mindset**.

12.3 Follow-Up – After the Conference

The knowledge gained throughout the conference should be entered back into the glossaries or other notes. The updated glossary is an invaluable asset for future assignment and makes the effort that was put into all the preparation all the more worthwhile.

13 Practical Part

In this section I describe and evaluate the empirical research. The aim was to investigate the methods used by novice interpreters at KAA when preparing for an interpreting assignment.

The research question was whether students follow the advice concerning preparation for interpreting that I found in literature and described in the theoretical part of the thesis.

13.1 Methodology and Procedure – Questionnaire

I used a web-based semi-structured questionnaire.

Respondents to the questionnaires are **students of the English for translators and interpreters study program** (ATP) at KAA. They were either students of the 3rd year of the bachelor's program or graduates (as the research took place during summer) or students of 2nd year of the master's program (most of whom did not graduate from ATP at the undergraduate level).

All of these students have already had courses in the theory of interpreting, some interpreting seminars and **hands-on training**. This made them ideal candidates for my research, as I could see whether they applied the knowledge they received in classes in real situations.

I compiled the questionnaire based on a similar study[23] and with respect to the aspects of preparation discussed in the theoretical part of the thesis. As all the respondents were native speakers of Czech, I created the questionnaire **in Czech** in order to make it more user-friendly.

The original questionnaire:

How did you communicate with the speaker?

What kind of materials did you get?

[23] Qualité et préparation de l'interprétation. Évolution des modes de préparation et rôle de l'Internet, Jungwha Choi, 2005

When did you get them?

Did you look for other materials as well?

How long did the preparation take you?

How long was the interpreted speech?

What did you focus on most?

What was the ratio of authentic:nonauthentic sources used?

What kind of dictionaries did you use?

Retrospective auto evaluation: was your preparation adequate?

What was the name and theme of the conference?

Once I compiled and consulted the questionnaire with my supervisor, I also sent it to four of my classmates in order to get their feedback concerning clarity, mistakes or missing answer options. After having adjusted the questionnaire according to my classmates' comments, I sent the questionnaire to the respondents.

I decided to use the method of questionnaire as it is a suitable method for both quantitative and qualitative research. Most questions had multiple choice answers in order to make it more comfortable for the respondents to fill in, and easier for my analysis. However, these questions also require that the author of the questionnaire knows all the possible answers. In some cases, I was not sure whether I thought of all the possible options and that is why I added the *Other – write* option as well. There were also five open-ended questions.

The first two questions asked about the interpreting assignment – what was the name and theme of the conference and how long was the interpreted speech.

Most questions were focused on the preparation process itself.

When did you start preparing?

How did you communicate with the speaker?

What kind of materials did you get?

When did you get them? Did you look for other materials as well?

Where did you look for them?

What kind of sources did you use (medium and type)?

What was the ratio of authentic: nonauthentic sources used?

What kind of dictionaries did you use?

How long did the preparation take you?

What did you focus on most?

What format was your glossary in?

The final questions asked about retrospective auto evaluation: was your preparation adequate? To what did you pay too much or too little attention? What do you want to focus more on next time?

The last question was entitled commentary, so that the respondents could explain or comment on any of the questions.

I sent them the link both via private message on facebook and e-mail, because I believe that respondents are more likely to respond to a personal request.

I used the format of a semi-structured questionnaire where some questions had multiple choices and some were open-ended. I tried to put in as many multiple choice questions as possible, because I wanted to make it easy for the respondents to fill in. In this way, I expect to get qualitative and quantitative data.

The questionnaire contained 18 questions, 13 of which were multiple choice (where the respondents could either tick only one or more options), 5 were open-ended questions, two of which were not obligatory.

13.2 Analysis of the Responses

Out of 50 students, I received 30 answers, which makes the return rate 60%. I deem this to be enough to evaluate the situation at KAA, however, on a larger scale, the results are inconclusive.

I will analyze the collected quantitative data by means of charts with commentary and the qualitative data by means of quotes and commentary.

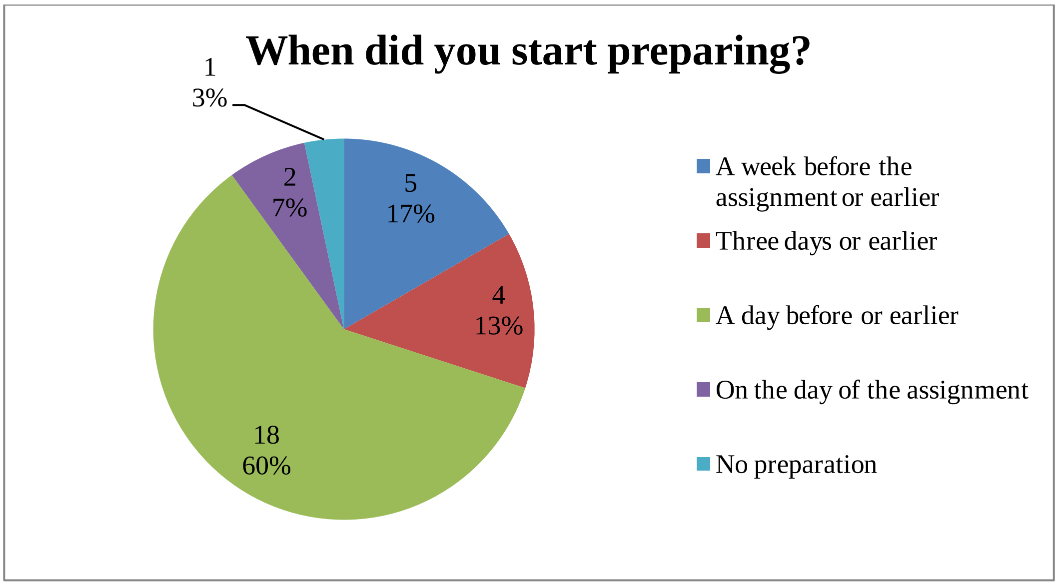

Chart 1: When did you start preparing?

Most respondents (18) started with their preparation a day before the assignment or earlier. Four respondents started to prepare three days before or earlier and five started preparing more than a week before the assignment. Only three respondents started to prepare on the day of the assignment or did not prepare at all.

There was a correlation between the length of the interpreting and the length of preparation; those who had a longer interpreting assignment started to prepare earlier.

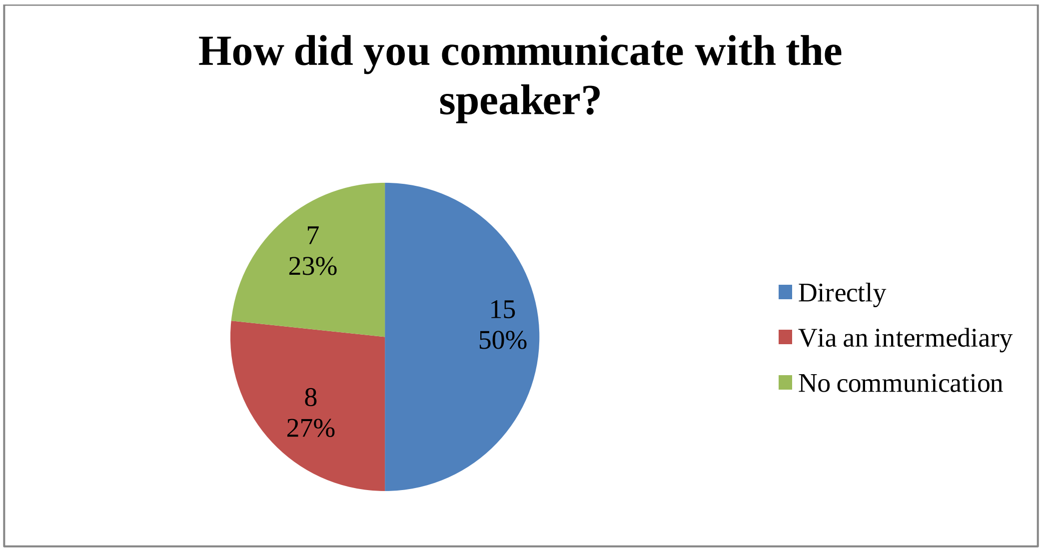

Chart 2: How did you communicate with the speaker?

Exactly half of the respondents (15) communicated with the speaker directly, 8 respondents communicated via an intermediary and 7 did not communicate with their speakers at all.

It is always good to communicate with the speaker in some way, sometimes the email they receive from the interpreter is when they become aware that their speech will be interpreted. However, if the organizers manage to get the materials from the speakers and send them to the interpreters, there is sometimes no need to contact the speaker directly anymore.

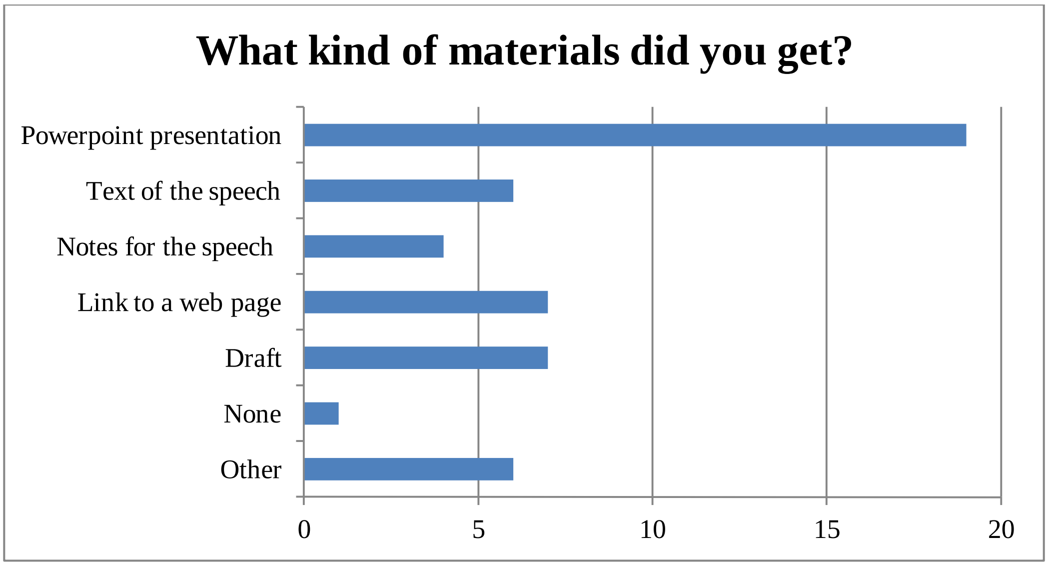

Chart 3: What kind of materials did you get?

The majority of respondents (19) received a powerpoint presentation. Other frequently provided materials were links to web pages (7), drafts (7) and text of the speech (6).

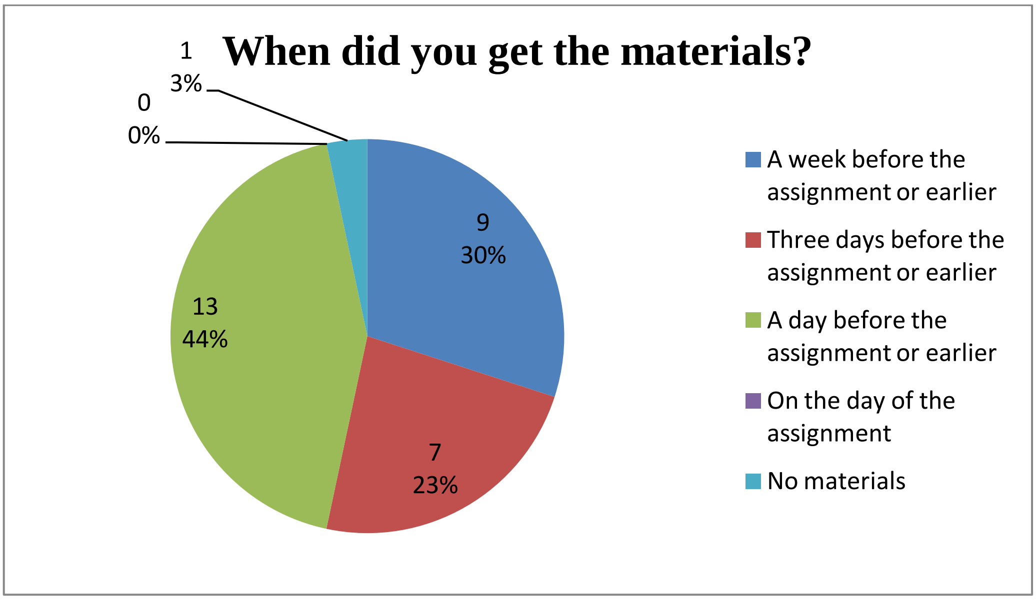

Chart 4: When did you get the materials?

Most of the respondents (16) received the supporting materials more than three days before the assignment, nine of them even more than a week before the assignment. Thirteen received these materials earlier than a day before the assignment, which is quite late and it does not allow the interpreter to spend so much time on the most relevant of materials. It is interesting that none of the respondents received the materials later, i.e. on the day of the assignment.

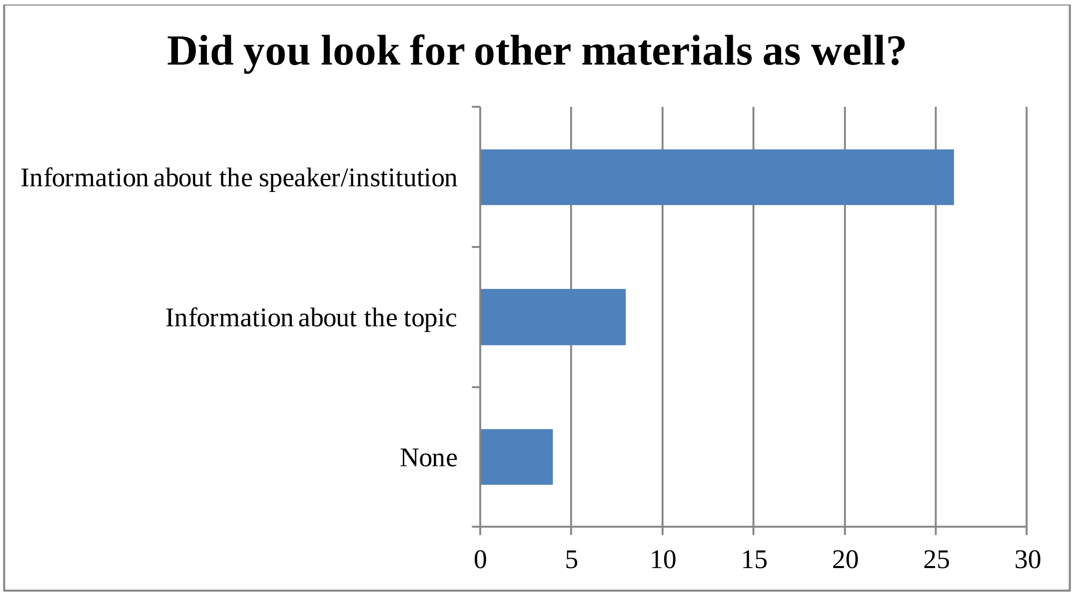

Chart 5: Did you look for other materials as well?

The vast majority of respondents (26) looked for other supporting materials as well, all of them looked for materials about the topic and 8 of them also looked for information regarding the speaker or the institution with which the speaker was associated.

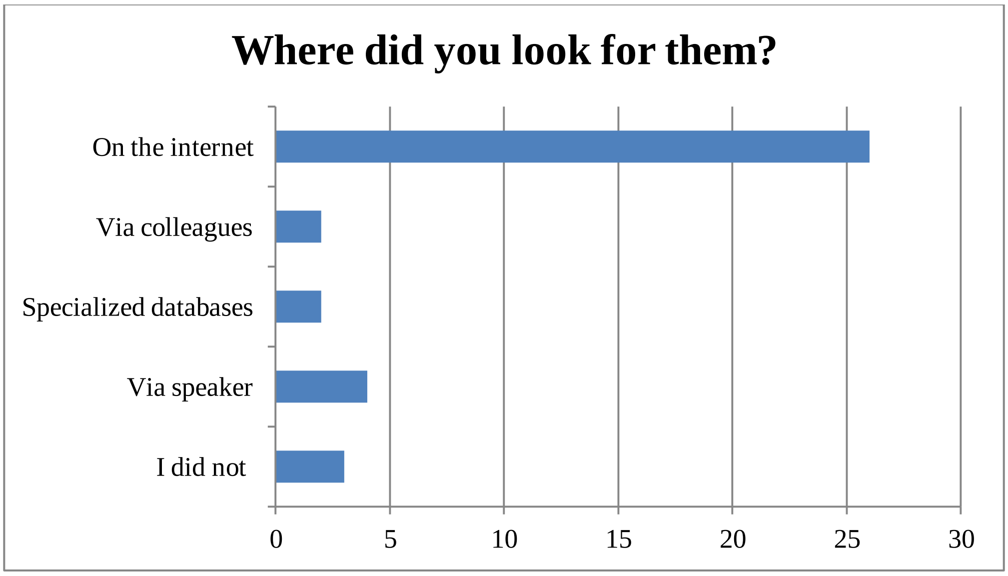

Chart 6: Where did you look for the additional materials?

As expected, most respondents looked for information on the internet (26). Other channels were significantly less popular: four communicated with the speaker, two communicated with their colleagues, two used specialized databases and one used expert literature.

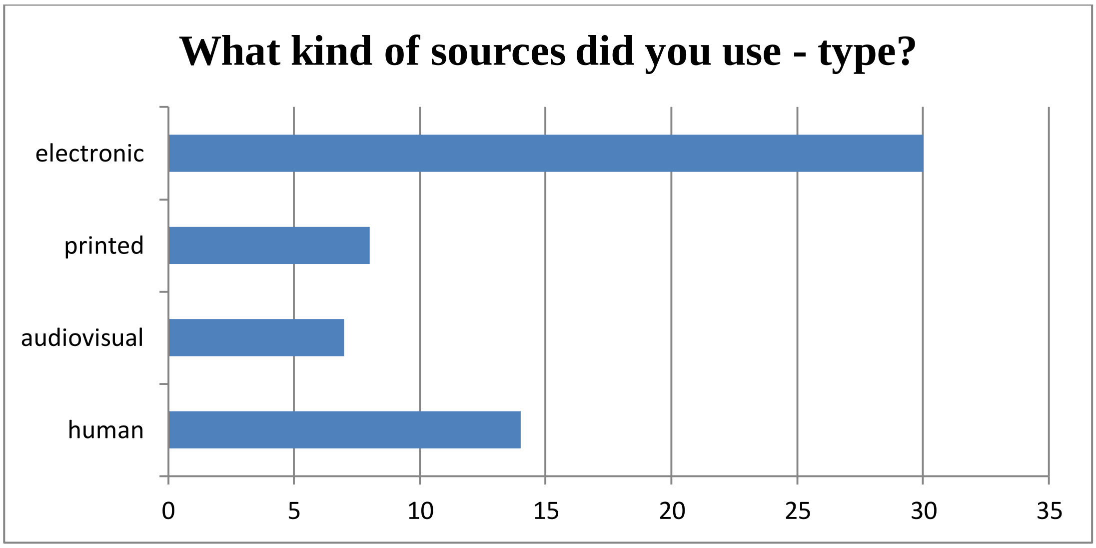

Chart 7: What kind of sources did you use – type?

All the respondents (30) used electronic sources. Some of them also used printed materials (8), audiovisual sources (7) or consulted the matter with someone in person (6).

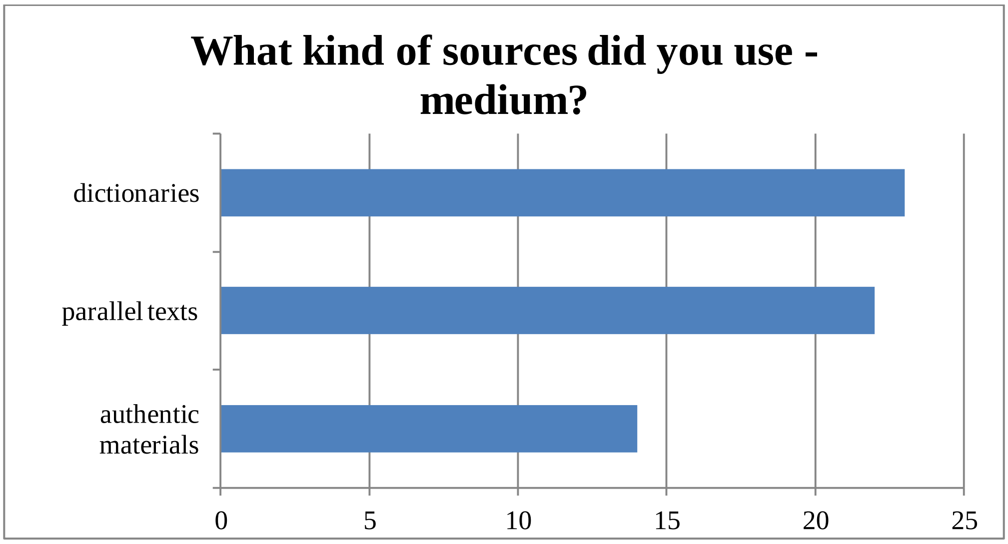

Chart 8: What kind of sources did you use – medium?

More than two thirds of the respondents used dictionaries (23) and parallel texts (22). Fourteen respondents used authentic materials. The majority of the rest of them did not have such materials available.

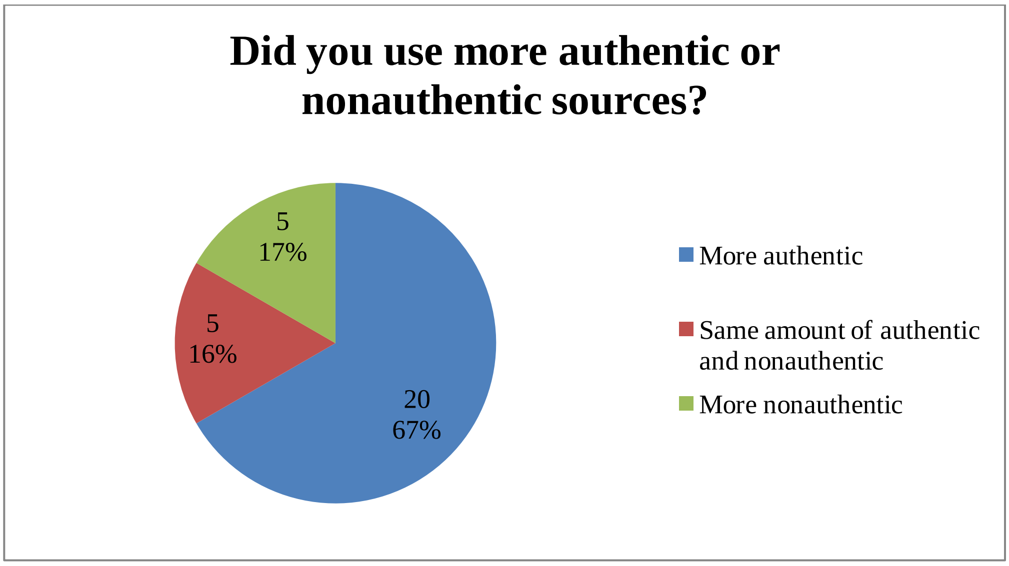

Chart 9: Did you use more authentic or nonauthentic sources?

Interpreters should use authentic materials whenever possible and as the first choice. It is good to see that the majority of respondents (20) follow this advice.

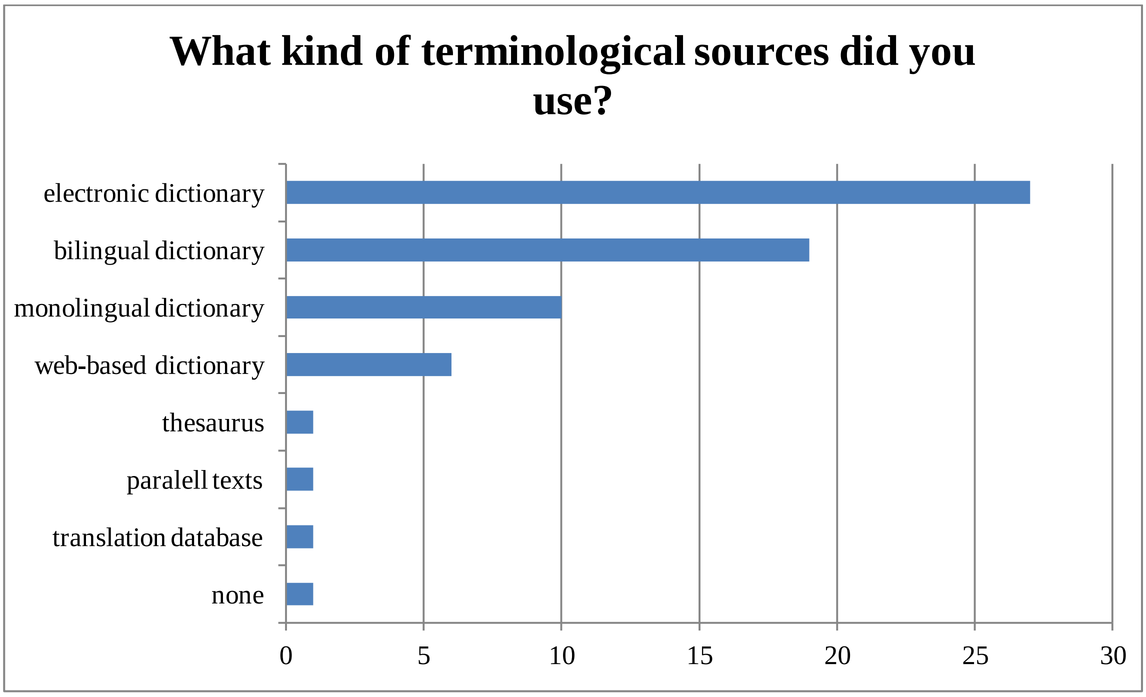

Chart 10: What kind of terminological sources did you use?

All of the respondents who used at least some dictionary (27) used an electronic one. Bilingual dictionaries (19) were more popular than monolingual dictionaries (10). Only very few (3) respondents also used alternatives to traditional dictionaries such as translation databases, parallel texts or thesauri.

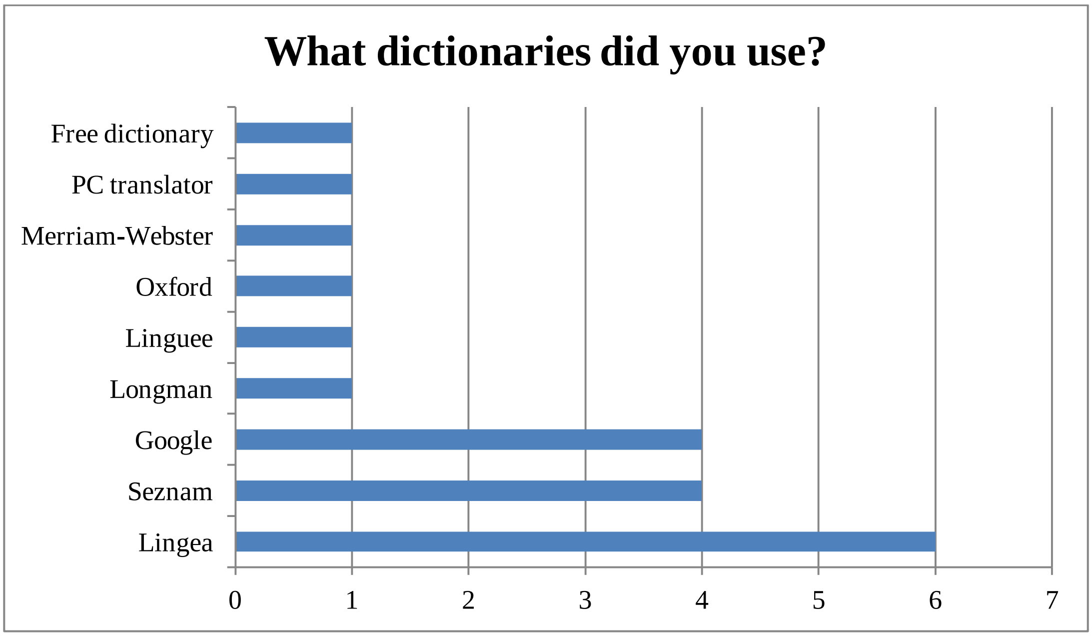

Chart 11: What dictionaries did you use?

Many respondents reported using more than two different dictionaries at a time. The most popular one was an electronic **Lingea Lexicon 5**, which has a bilingual and monolingual mode and also shows translation of terms in context.

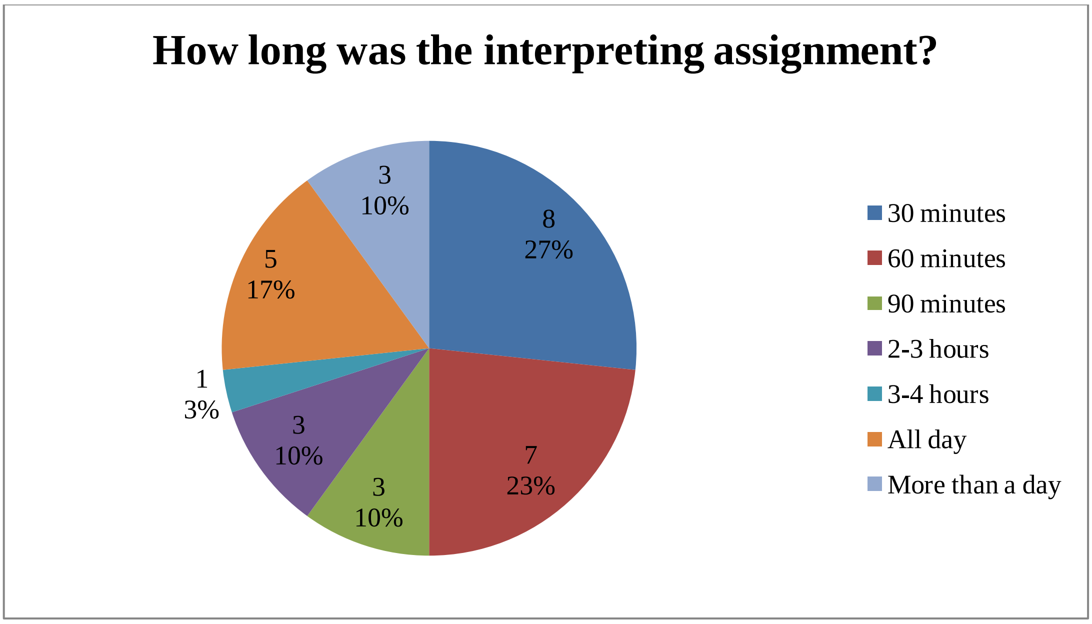

Chart 12: How long was the interpreting assignment?

We can see a considerable range of lengths of interpreting varying from 30 minute assignments (8) to full-day or longer assignments (8). The answers to this question need to be taken into account when interpreting the question about time spent by preparation.

Because of varying lengths of students' interpreting assignments, I decided to split the responses to the following question into two groups: Those whose assignment was shorter than 3 hours and those whose assignment was longer.

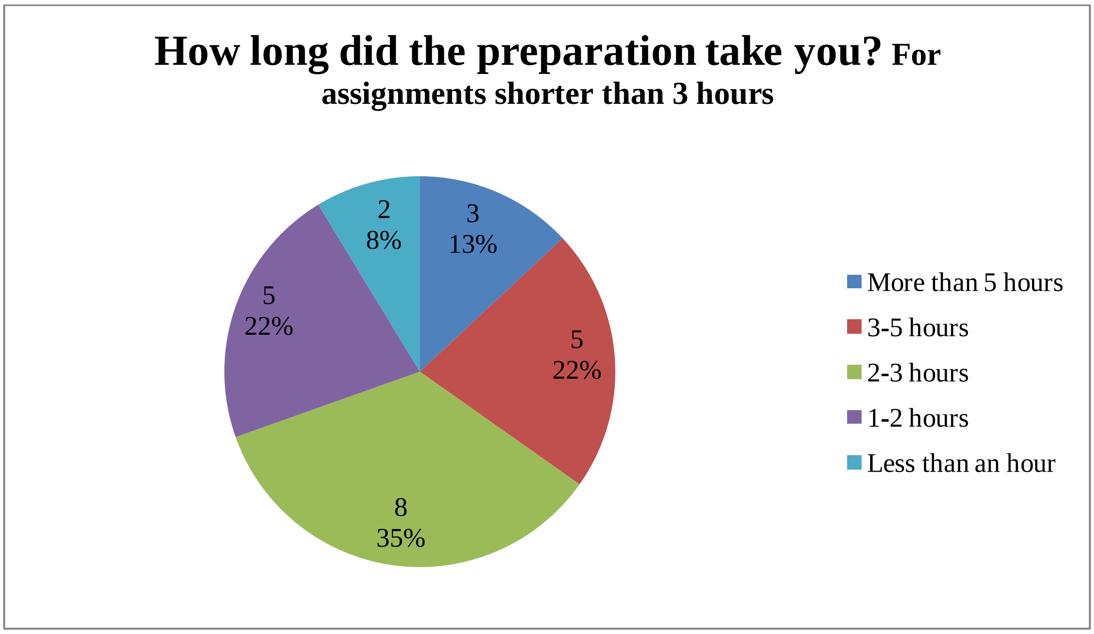

Chart 13: How long did the preparation take you? (Assignments shorter than 3 hours)

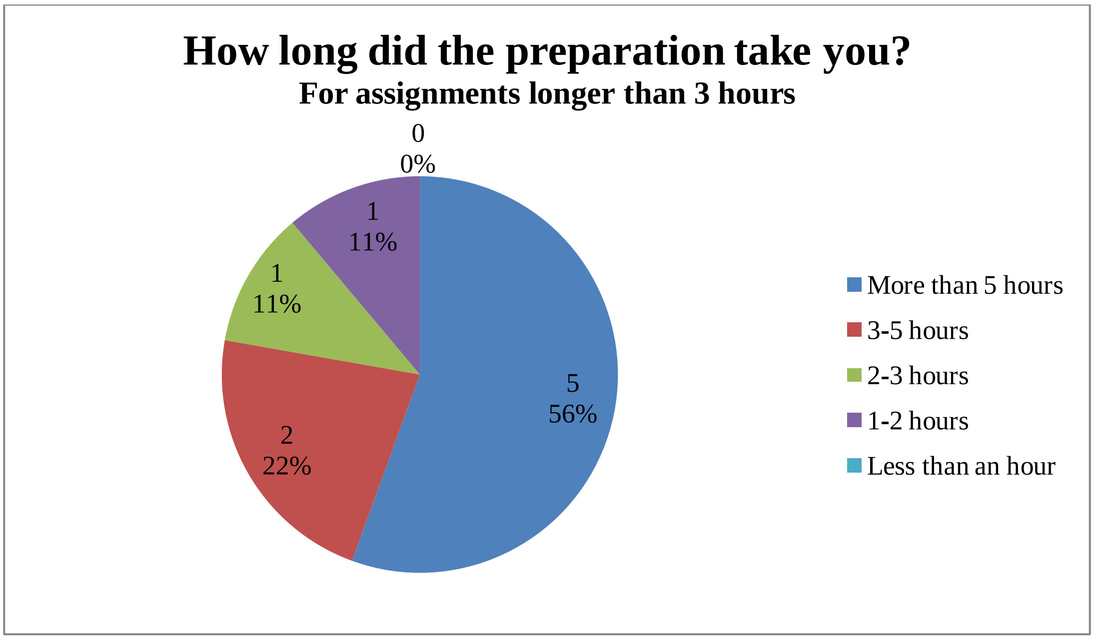

Chart 14: How long did the preparation take you? (Assignments longer than 3 hours)

We can see some correlation between the length of preparation and the length of the assignment. The respondents whose assignments were shorter than 3 hours prepared on average for 2-3 hours (8), while 8 respondents prepared for longer than for 3 hours and 7 respondents prepared for less than 2 hours.

Most of the respondents whose assignments were longer than three hours spent 5 hours or more by preparation.

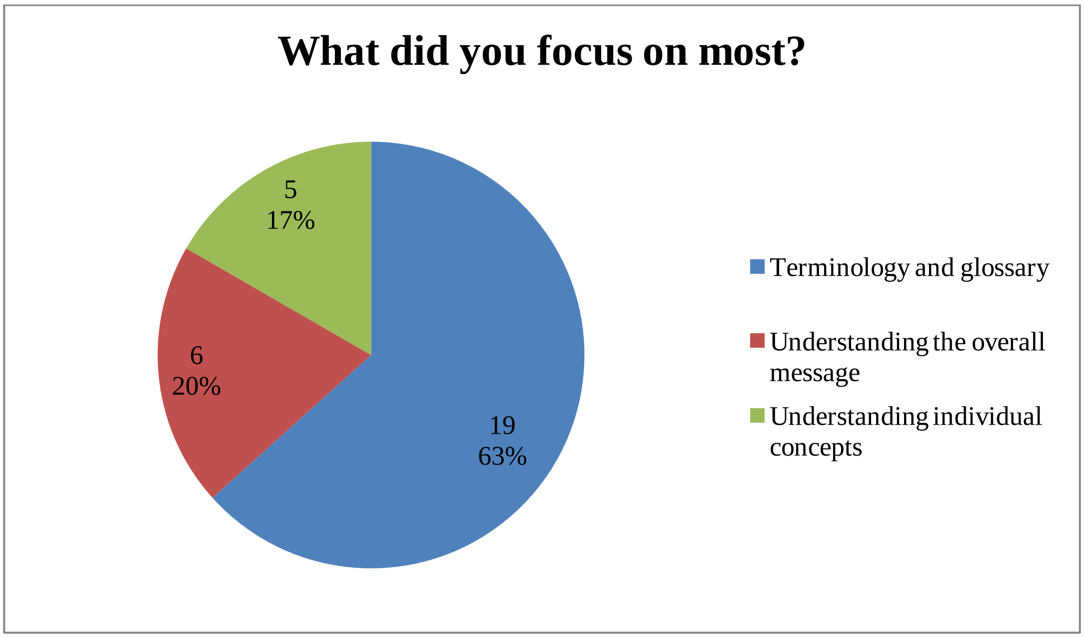

Chart 15: What did you focus on most?

Roughly two thirds of respondents (19) said that their major focus was the terminology and glossary, six and five respondents focused most on understanding the overall message and understanding individual concepts respectively.

It would be interesting to see experienced interpreters answer this question. My hypothesis is that they would focus more on higher cognitive units, i.e. the meaning of concepts and of the message as such.

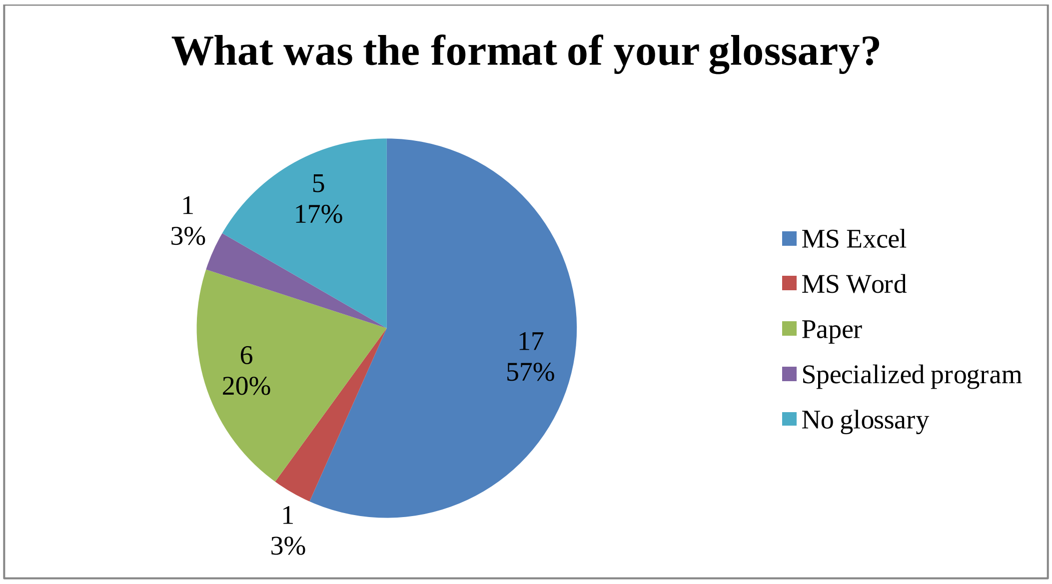

Chart 16: What was the format of your glossary?

Most respondents (17) compiled their glossary in MS Excel, six respondents used paper and five did not make any glossary at all. One respondent used MS Word and one used specialized software designed for glossaries. The MS Excel format is required and recommended in interpreting seminars, which explains the popularity of this format.

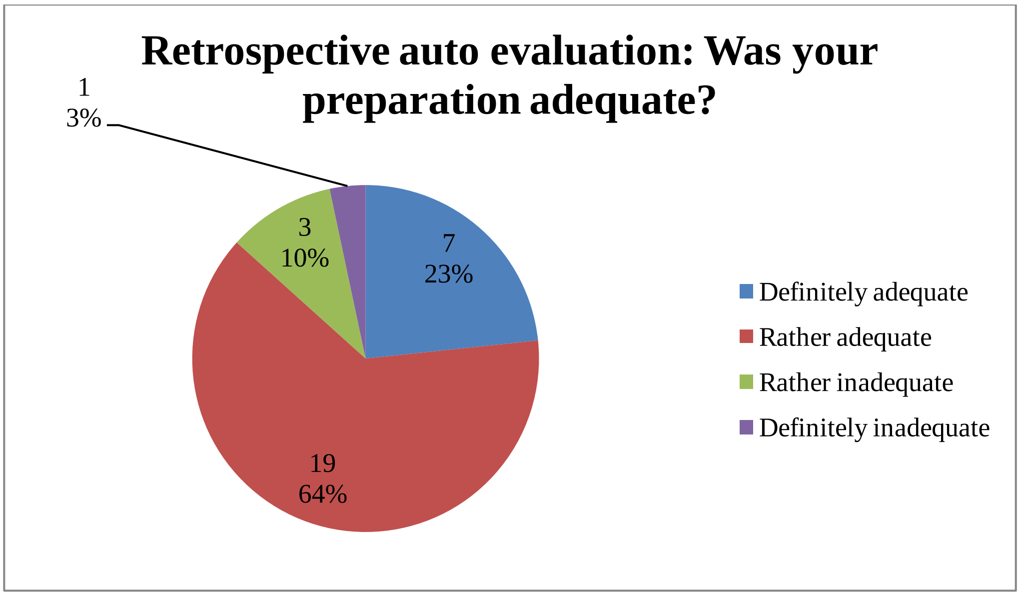

Chart 17: Retrospective auto evaluation: was your preparation adequate?

Most respondents were content with their preparation. They thought that their preparation was either definitely (7) or rather (19) adequate.

Three respondents evaluated their preparation as rather inadequate and one respondent said the preparation was definitely inadequate. The assignment was all day training for antenna installation, for which he prepared for 3-5 hours. The respondent later commented the situation:

I did not have enough time available and that is why I did not spend much time on preparation which was my biggest problem. I underestimated the difficulty of the assignment; on the other hand I could not spend more time on preparation anyway.

What did you pay too much or too little attention to and what do you want to focus more on next time?

In this open question which was not obligatory, I received 19 responses. Following is a discussion of the answers and then the answers themselves.

In 5 of them, the respondents complained about not getting the necessary materials in due time, which made their preparation more difficult.

They also mentioned the fact that there are things for which one cannot possibly prepare: for example vocabulary that was unrelated to the subject.

*More preparation would definitely be better, next time; **I am going to print out the text of the speech**, as the electronic format did not really work for me. It would be useful to put some notes in the text as well.*

*Perhaps I will **find out more about the speaker** and the institution they work for next time.*

***I underestimated** my preparation for **retour** interpreting into English.*

*I focused too much on individual words and **I underestimated understanding the overall message** of the speech. I want to work on this more next time.*

*I would like to spend more time on **understanding the topic as such**.*

*It is always helpful when I know at least the basics of the subject matter. However, **it is difficult to make up terms that are non-existent in the target language** because of the difference in cultural background, which was the case at this event. Next time, I will need to put more effort into translating such terms accurately and succinctly.*

*I had glossaries for the topic-related expressions, but **sometimes I was not able to come up with equivalents for words from general vocabulary** that was not related to the topic. Nevertheless, this is an issue that cannot be solved by preparing a glossary for a single assignment, but rather by systematic learning and self-development.*

*I think I prepare conscientiously for every assignment and the preparation definitely helps, but when the topic of conversation suddenly changed to the foundry industry, heating plants or the central heating distribution system in Olomouc and Krakow, the preparation did not help much then. I therefore think that **there are things and topics for which you cannot possibly prepare** and they require spending some time in the given field or in interpreting.*

*It is really difficult to evaluate what I could have done differently or what needs to be improved when **the speaker gave me the materials so late**. Then, even though the interpreter prepares on 100%, he feels that there are moments for which he could have* *prepared much better if he had had the materials earlier. For example he could process and study the terminology better. Unfortunately, even now the clients and speakers are used to providing the interpreters with documents in time, which makes rather uncomfortable working conditions for the interpreters.*

Next time, I will spend more time by reading some parallel texts. I said ***my preparation*** *was rather adequate, but it* ***could have been much better if the speaker had sent me the whole presentation*** *and not only a couple of slides.*

I underestimated the aspect of ***changing voice****. The assignment was simultaneous interpreting of five movies at a film festival.*

I would say the preparation was adequate in terms of terminology, glossary, understanding the topic at hand etc. I noticed a slight ***decrease in quality*** *when I interpreted* ***the speeches I had not prepared for****, for example housekeeping information etc.*

As I only received the information from the speaker at 11 pm on the preceding day, I did everything in my power to prepare. Next time, ***I want the speakers to give me their notes and presentation in time****.*

Once again ***I was too nervous*** *and for no reason. During preparation I could have studied the terminology and vocabulary even more thoroughly.*

The topic was very demanding several speeches were quite technical in the field of chemistry; they dealt with processes of degradation of art objects. There were more speakers involved, with some of them communication was OK; with some of them it was worse. ***I got some materials well in advance, some of them sent it only the day before the conference****. I had a more experienced colleague with me which helped me a lot as this was my first assignment.*

The preparation was adequate given that I got some materials a day before the conference and I got the presentations at the venue. ***In retrospect, I think that starting the preparation earlier would not have any larger effect than knowing a bit more about the topic in general.*** *Next time* ***I would study some parallel texts*** *and broaden my terminology list, however, this time, there was not enough time to do that. As the presentations were available only at the venue, I went through them during coffee breaks and the lunch break.* ***The working conditions were not suitable for whispered interpreting, which affected the***

quality of interpreting. *I felt exhausted and overloaded. If there was time for more thorough preparation, I would not have had to work during the breaks, which would certainly have improved my performance. I did not use dictionaries, but rather parallel texts.*

Playback theatre is based on improvisation and the part that I interpreted a presentation where ***the speaker described some basic concepts*** *and it focused mostly on practical demonstrations, and my preparation was absolutely adequate (as the speaker confirmed).*

I did not need to look for detailed information about the topic, because ***the speaker spoke in general terms*** *as he tried to describe the topic to the general public.*

I will further comment on the aforementioned issues in the following chapter.

13.1 Conclusions

In general, most **students approach preparation conscientiously** and follow the advice that has been described in the practical part of this thesis. The shorter time they spend by preparation can be explained by the length of their interpreting assignments, which are usually no longer than two hours.

Communication with the speaker is important, because without it, one cannot expect to get any supporting materials and these materials play a crucial role in the interpreter's preparation for an assignment. Almost a quarter of respondents did not communicate with the speaker at all, not even through an intermediary.

In the theoretical part, I described **the problem of speakers who do not realize that they need to collaborate with the interpreters** and that they should send them the supporting materials in order to successfully communicate their message to all the listeners. In the practical part, it was confirmed that there is a high proportion of **speakers who provided the materials too late**; only one or two days before the conference or at the venue, which worsened interpreters' working conditions and consequently lowered the quality of interpreting.

When they provided some materials, it was mostly a **powerpoint presentation**, which allows the speaker to add a visual side to their speech. When the presentations are not yet ready, it is good that some of the speakers send at least drafts or links to web pages.

Most **students also looked for some additional information**, mostly for information **about the speaker** or the institution represented by the speaker. Usually, this information is not included in the material provided by the speaker; however, it might be included in a program or similar materials. This information is valuable and it is worth the time to look for it.

As far as **glossaries** are concerned, most respondents deem them to be **the most important** part of the preparation process. Focusing on smaller cognitive units (i.e. terms or words) is a sign that they are inexperienced and that based on their school experience, they are used to equating preparation for interpreting with preparation of a glossary. Some of them said that next time they would focus more on understanding the overall message instead.

The most widespread **format of glossaries** (**MS Excel**) also corresponds with being influenced by the university, where this format is required. Furthermore, as they are still students, they do not feel the need to use specialized programs for glossary compilation.

It is good that **most respondents use multiple terminological sources at a time**, and apart from various mono and bilingual dictionaries, they also use parallel texts and other alternative terminological sources.

The overall level of students' preparation is adequate; however, there is still room for improvement. They should all **communicate with the speakers** and when they are not able to get the conference materials, they should at least **study some parallel texts**. I am aware that this approach is not always applicable and that the issue of not cooperating speakers needs to be addressed as well. Student should also **focus more on understanding the overall message rather than the individual terms**, because not knowing a word is a problem that can be solved much more easily than not understanding the overall message.

13.1.1 Suggestions for Further Research

Some of the students have already decided that **they will not pursue a career in professional interpreting** and this may also have an effect on their attitude to an assignment. However, such a question was not a part of the questionnaire. It would be interesting to see whether the fact that a student wants to become a professional interpreter affects the thoroughness of his preparation.

Further study could explore **the lack of cooperation between speakers and clients**, as this problem is quite frequent and most interpreters need to deal with this situation in their working process. It would be very useful to **raise awareness** about this issue and encourage the speakers and clients to cooperate. Institutions, such as the European Commission, are already making such efforts and e.g. hand out leaflets intended for speakers.[24]

As far as **methodology** is concerned, perhaps it would be better to distribute the questionnaires **shortly after a conference**, so that the students would remember more details about their preparation more vividly. Unfortunately in this survey, for some of the respondents their most recent interpreting assignment was more than half a year ago, which means that such data are more prone to bias.

[24] A leaflet by SCIC http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/scic/docs/tips2007_en.pdf

14 Shrnutí

Tato anglicky psaná práce se zabývá problematikou **krátkodobé přípravy na konferenční tlumočení**. Po úvodní kapitole následuje krátké vysvětlení procesu konferenčního tlumočení. Popisuji širší kontext tlumočení z hlediska probíhajících řečových aktů a stručně charakterizuji **účastníky komunikační situace** – klient, jazyková agentura, řečník, tlumočník a posluchači. Následující kapitola se věnuje kognitivní náročnosti tlumočení, kterou vysvětluji pomocí **modelu úsilí podle Daniela Gila**. Z uvedených kognitivních nároků na tlumočníka lze jasně vidět, že příprava na tlumočení je nezbytná jak v dlouhodobém, tak v krátkodobém horizontu.

Následně se věnuji **dlouhodobé přípravě tlumočníků**, která zahrnuje nejen univerzitní studium, během kterého si studenti osvojují zejména metodologii tlumočení, ale i celoživotní vzdělávání a udržování všeobecného kulturního rozhledu na vysoké úrovni. Mezi celoživotní vzdělávání můžeme zařadit také učení se dalším jazykům. O další vzdělávání a seberozvíjení by se tlumočník měl snažit i poté, co je jeho formální vzdělávání ukončeno.

Převážná část práce rozebírá **krátkodobou přípravou na tlumočnickou zakázku**. Nejprve vysvětluji, proč je příprava nezbytná, přičemž se odvolávám na profesionální tlumočníky, mj. Danicu Seleskovitchovou a Andrewa Gilliese. Vysvětluji také, proč je nedílnou součástí přípravy tlumočníka příprava glosáře, jak by **tlumočnický glosář** měl vypadat, jaké položky by měl obsahovat a v jakých formátech ho lze vytvářet.

Nedílnou součástí přípravy na tlumočení a tvorby glosáře je práce s nejrůznějšími, v dnešní době převážně elektronickými, zdroji. Nejprve zdroje klasifikuji z různých úhlů pohledu; jak z hlediska jejich relevance k dané tlumočnické zakázce (konferenční dokumenty, paralelní texty, terminologické zdroje, lidské zdroje), tak z hlediska faktorů využitelnosti podle Daniela Gila (existence, vnější přístup, vnitřní přístup, pokrytí a spolehlivost).

Následně se zabývám tím, **jak zdroje vyhledávat**. Zejména píši o možnostech pokročilého vyhledávání na internetu, což je snadno naučitelná dovednost, kterou by v dnešní době měli ovládat snad všichni uživatelé internetu, nejen tlumočníci. Po získání zdrojů a ověření jejich důvěryhodnosti následuje jejich zpracování. K nastudování potřebných materiálů lze použít například také stále populárnější alternativní přístup: **myšlenkové mapy**.

Teoretickou část práce uzavírá **chronologický přehled** fází tlumočníkovy přípravy. Popisuji zde, jakým způsobem pokračuje práce se zdroji a glosářem v průběhu samotné konference, kde má tlumočník nejužší kontakt s tlumočeným materiálem (může se osobně setkat s řečníkem, má k dispozici aktuální verze dokumentů) a bezprostředně po konferenci, kdy má ještě v živé paměti, jakým způsobem vyřešil problematické pasáže a měl by si svá řešení poznamenat (například do glosáře), aby je v budoucnosti mohl vyhledat a opětovně použít.

V praktické části jsem metodou **dotazníkového šetření** zkoumala, **zda se studenti** ATP (Angličtina se zaměřením na komunitní tlumočení a překlad) **řídí radami** shrnutými v teoretické části práce během své přípravy na tlumočnické zakázky v rámci povinné školní praxe. Dotazník vyplnilo 30 studentů bakalářského či magisterského stupně programu ATP.

Z analýzy odpovědí vyplývá, že většina dotazovaných studentů se připravuje svědomitě, ačkoliv zejména u některých dotazovaných lze také pozorovat jisté nedostatky. Studenti by zejména měli více komunikovat s řečníky, v případě nedodání autentických materiálů vyhledat alespoň paralelní texty a při přípravě se více soustředit na vyšší kognitivní celky, tedy snažit se pochopit spíše celkové sdělení, než jednotlivé termíny. Častou komplikací při přípravě na zakázku jsou například **nespolupracující řečníci**, kteří dodávají tlumočníkům materiály na poslední chvíli, což tlumočníkům značně zhoršuje pracovní podmínky.

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17 Anotace

Autor:	Tereza Kopřivová
Katedra:	Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky FF UPOL
Rok obhajoby:	2015
Název česky:	Krátkodobá příprava na konferenční tlumočení
Název anglicky:	Short-Term Preparation for Conference Interpreting
Vedoucí práce:	PhDr. Veronika Prágerová PhD.
Počet stran (včetně příloh):	65
Počet znaků (včetně příloh):	85 335
Počet znaků (bez příloh):	85 335
Počet příloh:	0
Počet titulů použité literatury:	43
Klíčová slova v ČJ:	konferenční tlumočení, příprava na tlumočení, práce se zdroji, tlumočnický glosář, získávání vědomostí
Klíčová slova v AJ:	conference interpreting, preparation for interpreting, source management, interpreter's glossary, knowledge acquisition

Anotace v ČJ:

Práce se zabývá problematikou krátkodobé přípravy na tlumočení. Na počátku práce uvádím čtenáře do procesů konferenčního tlumočení. Popisuji širší kontext tlumočení z hlediska účastníků komunikační situace. Věnuji se také kognitivní náročnosti tlumočení, ze které vyplývá, že příprava na tlumočení je nezbytná jak v dlouhodobém, tak krátkodobém horizontu.

Následně se krátce věnuji dlouhodobé přípravě tlumočníků, tedy univerzitnímu i celoživotnímu vzdělávání, nicméně převážná část práce rozebírá krátkodobou přípravou na tlumočení. Nedílnou součástí přípravy na tlumočení i přípravy glosáře je práce s nejrůznějšími, v dnešní době převážně elektronickými, zdroji. Popisuji, se kterými zdroji by měl tlumočník pracovat, jakým způsobem by je měl (na internetu) vyhledávat a následně zpracovávat. Zmiňuji také alternativní možnost přípravy metodou myšlenkových map.

Praktickou část tvoří dotazníkové šetření, kterého se zúčastnilo 30 studentů ATP a ve kterém zkoumám, nakolik se při přípravě na tlumočnickou zakázku řídili radami, které jsou shrnuty v teoretické části práce.

Anotace v AJ:

The thesis deals with the issue of short-term preparation for conference interpreting. In the beginning, I briefly introduce the issues of conference interpreting. I describe the context of the communication situation with respect to the involved participants of the process. The cognitive demands of interpreting are explained on the effort model by Daniel Gile. Interpreting is a demanding activity, which means that preparation is necessary both in the short-term and in the long-term.

I briefly describe long-term preparation (university studies and lifelong learning), but the substantial part of the thesis deals with short-term preparation for interpreting. Compiling a glossary is also an important part of the preparation process. A great deal of attention is given to sources that should be used for short term preparation and glossary compilation. I describe how to find these sources (especially on the internet), how to evaluate their relevance and reliability, and I also summarize how to process them. I also mention an alternative approach to preparation by using the method of modern Mind Mapping.

The practical part consists of a questionnaire survey conducted among ATP (English for Translators and Interpreters) students at Palacký University in Olomouc regarding their methods of preparation for an interpreting assignment.