

A DIACHRONIC PERSPECTIVE OF CONFERENCE INTERPRETER EDUCATION WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF UKRAINE'S EU INTEGRATION: A CASE STUDY OF TNPU (2003– PRESENT)

Oksana Kutsa

PhD, Associate Professor,

Associate Professor at the Department of English Philology in

Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, Ukraine

Lviv, Ukraine

Associate Professor at Theory and Practice of Translation /

Interpretation Department in

Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatiuk National

Pedagogical University, Ukraine

Ternopil, Ukraine

In today's interconnected world, the demand for conference interpreters from Ukraine is steadily growing, especially considering the country's current situation and its path toward EU integration. European institutions, along with other international organizations such as the UN, OSCE, and various humanitarian bodies, are actively recruiting Ukrainian interpreters, highlighting the need for well-trained professionals capable of meeting international communication standards.

This growing demand underscores the importance of training interpreters who understand that their role involves much more than simply converting words from one language to another. Interpreting is a professional activity aimed at facilitating meaningful communication between people of different languages and cultures, thereby creating added value. Effective interpreters must adhere to several key principles: confidentiality, continuous professional development, professional integrity, technical responsibility, and collegiality [4].

The aim of this presentation is to share the experience and best practices in training professional conference interpreters at Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University (TNPU), Ukraine by examining the historical development and current practices of interpreter education at the institution.

The history of training future translators and interpreters at TNPU began in 2003, when the program was launched and officially licensed by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (License Series AA No.

521623, approved by the State Attestation Commission on February 25, 2003, Protocol No. 43). Since 2004, professional training has been carried out by the Department of Theory and Practice of Translation / Interpretation [1].

From the very beginning, an integral part of translators' and interpreters' training has been courses such as *Practice of Translation and Interpreting*, *Consecutive Interpreting* and *Interpreters' Note-taking Technique*, *Practice of Simultaneous Interpreting*, and *Conference Interpreting*. Over time, the number of hours dedicated to these courses has increased, and new courses have also been added [2; 3].

To ensure high-quality training in the courses mentioned above, experienced lecturers holding PhD degrees in Translation Studies and Pedagogy have been engaged in training professional conference interpreters. The faculty continues to grow professionally by actively participating in international conferences, trainings and workshops both in Ukraine and abroad. A major milestone for the trainers was the recent opportunity to attend a 'Training for Trainers' seminar organized by the European Commission, held from 10 to 14 July 2023, which brought together experts from Ukrainian universities offering conference interpreting courses, both in person in Brussels and online, as part of the EU's broader efforts to support Ukraine's linguistic capacity-building following its EU candidate status by providing up-to-date knowledge on interpreting techniques, curriculum design aligned with European standards, and innovative teaching tools [6]. The knowledge obtained by the representatives of TNPU was integrated into the educational process and disseminated during "Education – Energy of The Future" Educational Forum by three representatives of the department (October 22, 2023) as well as during visiting lecture (November 15, 2023) and workshops (spring 2024) for the staff of the Department of Communicative Linguistics and Translation of Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University.

Furthermore, the Department of Theory and Practice of Translation / Interpretation at the Faculty of Foreign Languages received a grant from the European Parliament to develop a "Conference Interpreting Course" for master's students at TNPU. This course aims to train interpreters according to the standards and requirements of the European Parliament and includes modules such as interpretation theory, simultaneous and consecutive interpreting, sight translation, terminology, voice training, and

EU institutions [5]. This grant provided an opportunity to share in-depth knowledge of conference interpreting with selected candidates, participate in master classes organized by the European Parliament for future conference interpreters, and arrange study visits to Ukrainian and Polish higher educational institutions. These visits enabled the staff to observe practical sessions in simultaneous interpreting, test interpreting equipment, and engage in meaningful discussions on current issues in interpreter training, including curriculum content, teaching methods, and ways to enhance both educational components and the overall quality of professional training.

An integral part of effective conference interpreter training is cooperation with local authorities by providing professional consecutive and simultaneous interpreting. The first experience for the team of future simultaneous interpreters dates back to 2015, when a group of students, specially trained for the event by their lecturers, provided EN-UA and UA-EN simultaneous interpreting during an offsite session of the International Trade Club in Ukraine (October 8, 2015, Ternopil). Since then, teams of conference interpreters (consisting of both undergraduate and graduate students) have been providing consecutive and simultaneous interpretation at International Economic Forums (2016–2019) and, to this day, continue to do so at various international events held across the Ternopil region.

One more essential component of training future interpreters is regular interaction with professionals in the field through webinars, personal meetings, seminars, and conferences. These events offer students invaluable opportunities to gain insights into real-world interpreting, learn about current trends and challenges in the profession, and receive practical advice from experienced practitioners. The department also regularly organizes seminars as well as scientific and practical conferences where students, young researchers, associate and full professors can present their research, participate in discussions, and observe high-level interpreting in action, further enhancing their academic and professional development.

In conclusion, Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University offers comprehensive and practice-driven interpreter training components of the educational program that meet international standards and address Ukraine's growing demand for qualified professionals. Through strong theoretical foundations, international collaboration, and real-world experience, TNPU prepares interpreters who are linguistically

skilled, culturally aware, and ethically responsible, playing a key role in amplifying Ukraine's voice as it moves toward European integration.

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