SCHOOLS OF SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETATION IN RUSSIA AND ABROAD

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Abstract. Simultaneous interpretation is nowadays getting more and more topical as it helps save considerable time resources and provides for more issues to be settled in the given time. Therefore, the problem of teaching this type of interpretation is given serious focus both in Russia and abroad. Simultaneous interpretation goes back in history to the Nuremberg trial over Nazi war criminals, where this type of interpretation was first widely utilized. Consequently, with the infrastructure of international organizations emerging rapidly, first of all, that of the UN followed by the OSCE, consecutive interpretation was replaced by simultaneous interpretation as the latter provided for less time to be spent on discussing and/or agreeing an issue. Furthermore, this reason was taken by the international business community to introduce the simultaneous interpretation into the setup of their international activities. In our current intervention, we have embarked on analyzing the approaches used by the leading educational establishments in Western Europe and the Russian Federation in the issues related to teaching simultaneous interpretation. In our speech, we provide a certain historical excursion into the problem of simultaneous interpretation culminating with some approaches towards its
teaching in various simultaneous interpretation schools.  
The aim of our research was to review the material, available both in hard copy and online, that reflects the history of how both the simultaneous interpretation itself and the methodology of its teaching emerged.  
The topicality of the research is substantiated by the demand of both simultaneous interpreters and methodology to teach this type of interpretation in certain academic conditions.  
The novelty of this research consists in attempting to analyze, for the first time in many years, the approaches towards teaching simultaneous interpretation in Russia and abroad.  
As a result of our review, we have come to a conclusion that the approaches towards teaching simultaneous interpretation in Russia and abroad differ. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that the Russian academic establishment has been trying to use the best practices offered by both Russian and foreign methodologists in this field.  
Keywords: simultaneous interpretation, approaches towards teaching, simultaneous interpretation schools

Introduction
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**Simultaneous interpretation research in Europe and Russia**

The first attempts to provide a specialized education go back to 1941 when the University of Geneva became home to the High School of Translation and Interpreting. It was the first establishment to pay special attention to interpretation. In France, the Paris Business School opened in Paris in 1949 a section for translators and interpreters. Soon this initiative was picked up by Sorbonne that in 1959 founded its own High School of Translators and Interpreters, and by the Catholic Institute in Paris that opened its High Institute of Translation and Interpreting (Popova O.I., 2009).

One of the authors of the theoretical basis of teaching simultaneous interpretation in Western Europe is Danica Seleskovitch, the founder of the High School of Translators and Interpreters (ESIT) at Sorbonne-Paris 3. In 2002, we saw her paper “Pédagogie raisonnée de l’interprétation” (Seleskovitch D., 2002) that provides detailed explanation of the simultaneous interpretation training stages.

The simultaneous interpretation research in Russia, as it does in the West, goes back to practice. A serious impetus to practical application of interpreting (and, consequently, to its teaching) was given by the Great Patriotic War that drastically increased the demand for interpreters.

The main centres for teaching interpretation in pre-war and war conditions were the Moscow Second State Pedagogic institute for Foreign Languages (nowadays, it is Moscow State Linguistic University), Moscow Institute for Oriental Studies as well as the military departments of western and eastern languages that were established on their basis in February and July 1940. These military departments were incorporated on 12 April 1942 into the Military Institute for Foreign Languages of the Red Army (MIFL RA) (nowadays it is the Military University of the Russian Defence Ministry). The graduates of these higher educational
establishments during the war were sent directly to the frontline, after a snap language and interpreting course.

One of the first MIFL RA graduates (in 1945) was Mikhail Zwilling, who took part in the war as a military interpreter at the 3rd Belorussia Front, who was a theorist and practitioner of translation and interpretation. His “professional combat debut”, as Mikhail Zwilling said, was at the International Conference of the Communist and Workers’ parties in 1957. It was the starting point of the glorious way of M. Zwilling as a simultaneous interpreter: he worked at important political events at a very high level, including the ones where heads of state were attended; he interpreted abroad at congresses, conferences, seminars, sessions of international organizations, meetings of political and public persons, scientific congresses, negotiations between the highest statesmen and leaders of foreign countries. His rich interpreting and teaching experience in conjunction with his researcher gift laid a wonderful foundation for various interpretation research activities. Mikhail Zwilling is mostly associated with such educational establishments as Moscow State Pedagogic institute for Foreign Languages and MIFL.

Geliy Chernov was another bright representative of the Russian simultaneous interpretation science. All his practical work was organized in drafting his doctoral thesis on simultaneous interpretation that G. Chernov completed in 1978. In his article thesis “Basics of Simultaneous Interpretation” (Chernov G.V., 1987), he presented his probability-prediction model of the simultaneous interpretation.

Anatoly F. Shiryaev, a bright representative of the military school of translation and interpretation, a MIFL graduate, was the main simultaneous interpretation methodologist of his time. In his article thesis “Simultaneous Interpretation. Activity of a Simultaneous Interpreter and Methodology of Teaching Simultaneous Interpretation” (Shiryaev A.F., 1979) based on his doctoral thesis A. Shiryaev described the simultaneous interpretation from the speech activity theory point of view. It also provides, in detail, his
comprehensive simultaneous interpretation model. Of special interest is the section in this article thesis dedicated to the methodology of teaching simultaneous interpretation. After A. Shiryaev, work of such volume and importance has not been undertaken in Russian science so far.

**Simultaneous interpretation training abroad**

One of the oldest centres of teaching professional translators and interpreters is the Department for Translation and Interpreting (FTI) at the University of Geneva (Faculté de Traduction et D'interprétation, 2019). 13 October 1941 saw the establishment of the School for Interpreters of Geneva (EIG). Later, in 1972, after introducing a translation course into the curriculum, it was renamed into a School for Translation and Interpreting (ETI) that in 2011 became a department at the University of Geneva.

Teaching simultaneous interpretation at this educational establishment is foreseen under a master programme on conference interpreting. The main subjects that are taught under this master programme at the Department are: theory of translation and interpretation, consecutive interpretation, simultaneous interpretation, parliamentary procedures and terminology of conferences, international institutions. After graduating, the students are to maintain a master thesis.

The main translation and interpreting school in France is the High School of Translators and Interpreters at Sorbonne-Paris 3. The School was established in 1957. It provides training for masters in conference interpreting, translation, sign language interpreting, and for scientists. The master programme for conference interpreting (Master professionnel: Interprétation de conference, 2019) is aimed at teaching high-level interpreters capable for accurate and continuous intercultural communication at important scientific for a, international conferences and bilateral contacts. The training lasts two years. The first-year master students are trained in consecutive interpreting, its shorthand method as well as at-sight interpreting. They receive theory of translation and interpreting, perfect their French and English speaking skills. The
students are trained to analyze an oral message. Besides linguistic subjects, the master students study geopolitics, law, economics, IT. Second-year master students develop, perfection and master their consecutive and simultaneous interpreting skills. They study issues of international affairs, European space, comparative law, and get ready for conferences. At the following stage, the students practise their skills at mockup conferences. During the second year, the master students have a probation in the booth of a real simultaneous interpreter as an observer.

The main centre of teaching interpretation in Austria is the University of Vienna. Established in 1365 by Duke Rudolph IV, the University of Vienna has always been an educational establishment attractive for students from all over the world. Simultaneous interpretation is trained at the University of Vienna under a master programme for translation that lasts four terms and takes up 120 credits. The teaching language under this programme is German, therefore all of the students must speak it at a very good level. To complete this master programme, the students choose, besides German, at least one more language.

The curriculum (Curriculum für das Masterstudium Translation, 2019) of the master programme for translation includes several main modules. They are:

2. Practical professional training and in-depth study of subjects (70 credits). In this module, the students have a choice of further training. Of more interest for us are the “Dialogue Interpreting” and “Conference Interpreting” modules.
3. Final module dedicated to the control over drafting a master thesis (4 credits).

One of the centres to train translators and interpreters in Germany is the University of Leipzig. Its history goes back to 1409. Currently, the University comprises 14 departments. It involves about 5,300 faculty members and 30,000 students.
Simultaneous interpreting is trained at the University’s Institute for Applied Linguistics and Translation (IALT) under a master programme for conference interpreting (MA Konferenzdolmetschen, 2019) during four terms (two years). The training programme provides for 3,600 hours of classroom activities and self-preparation.

With the dedicated work to mold necessary competences, the master programme trains the students for future work as interpreters. The technical outfit of the Institute enables the students to familiarize themselves with the real conditions, in which simultaneous interpreters work. The technical means include simultaneous interpretation booths and portable systems as well as a laboratory featuring audio- and video-recording capability.

During the second term, the master students take part in special projects that require interpreting services. They include, inter alia, interpretation at international training courses, simultaneous interpretation of a museum excursion as well as mocking up conferences with speakers and simultaneous interpreting.

Another important interpretation training centre in Germany is the High School of Applied Languages at the Institute of Languages and Interpreting of Munich (SDI MUC). Simultaneous interpreting is trained here under a master programme for conference interpreting (MA Dolmetschen, 2019) and lasts three terms. In the end, a master thesis is drafted and maintained. The programme provides for 90 credits. It requires two foreign languages to be studied.

Training is carried out in small groups and is aimed at developing interpreting skills. At the same time, an individual approach is applied to students. Master students develop, perfection and master their interpreting skills participating in training conferences, practical classes on consecutive and simultaneous interpreting, correct their utterance, study terminology on various topics and receive necessary theoretical knowledge on applied linguistics, cultural science and intercultural communication.
At the Belgian University of Saint Louis (Brussels), simultaneous interpretation is trained under a bachelor programme (Bachelor's Degree in Translation and Interpreting, 2019) for three years (180 credits). It is one of the few European universities that start simultaneous interpreting training as early as at a bachelor stage. Besides interpreting (consecutive and simultaneous), translation is also trained on various topics.

The subjects that cover, in accordance of the curriculum, the first year, are compulsory for all the students. As of the second year, the students may choose their individual training programme comprising compulsory subjects and the subjects of choice. Such a programme is to be approved by the leadership of the University.

The peculiar features of training at the University of Saint Louis are as follows:
- the training programme is dedicated to francophones; therefore, the training is provided mostly in French;
- the studying of two foreign languages is foreseen;
- to improve the overall education level of the future interpreters, university-wide subjects are taught.

**Simultaneous interpretation training in Russia**

St Petersburg School of Conference Interpreting and Translation (SCIT) operates at the Russian State Pedagogical University named after Alexander Herzen. SCIT is an additional education establishment. In its work, it uses best practices of both Russian and foreign educational establishments.

Practical simultaneous interpreting training is provided by practicing interpreters. Lectures and seminars are covered by the representatives of the Russian MFA, translation and interpreting services of the European Commission, European Parliament, the United Nations, FAO, IMF.

Simultaneous interpreting is trained under the programme for conference interpreting (Conference Interpreting, 2019) for ten months. Given the graduation exams are passed, a standard certificate is issued on professional retraining under the
“Interpretation in international multilateral and business communication” programme, with the relevant speciality. The training is focused on practical interpreting. To this end, the practice is divided into two categories: oral practice aimed at mastering two foreign languages, and practical interpreting (consecutive and simultaneous) with two foreign languages. Simultaneous interpretation is practised in conference halls outfitted with simultaneous interpretation and video teleconferences capabilities.

At Moscow State University (MSU), simultaneous interpretation is trained on the basis of High School for Translation and Interpretation (HSTI). It is incorporated into the “Simultaneous Interpretation Intensive Course” additional education programme (Simultaneous Interpretation Basics refresher programme, 2019) that lasts four months. This programme is accomplished in two stages: “Simultaneous Interpretation Basics” (two months) and “Conference (oral simultaneous) Interpretation” (two months). Students are admitted for the programme after comprehensive tests to determine the knowledge of foreign and Russian languages and aptitude to work as a simultaneous interpreter. If passed, based on the final attestation test, a qualification upgrade certificate on “Conference (oral simultaneous) Interpretation” programme is issued as well as a certificate of the MSU HSTI. The attestation test is carried out by a joint commission of the HSTI instructors and professional community experts.

Moscow State Linguistic University (MSLU) provides simultaneous interpretation training under the “Simultaneous Interpretation. Mastership Basics” professional retraining programme (Simultaneous Interpretation. Mastership Basics, 2019) that lasts from one to two years. Applicants for the programme undergo entrance tests that include a written translation from English into Russian, an interview on the practical course of English and with simultaneous interpretation instructors. On completing the training, the students take the final exam and maintain a graduate thesis on the chosen topic.
Moscow State Institute for International Affairs (MGIMO University) provides simultaneous interpretation training at the School of Business and International Proficiency under the “Theory and Practice of Simultaneous Interpretation for International Organizations” professional retraining programme (Theory and Practice of Simultaneous Interpretation for International Organizations, 2019). It lasts nine months. Practice takes place on evenings four times a week, with four academic hours each.

Besides the practice on simultaneous interpretation (728 hours), students also study such subjects as Theory of Simultaneous Interpretation in Economy (32 hours), Simultaneous Interpreter Elocution (28 hours). At the end of the programme, the final attestation paper is maintained that has 40 hours of the budget to be drafted.

Simultaneous interpretation is also trained at other educational establishments, such as, for instance, Cosmopolite language school (Simultaneous and Consecutive Interpreting Course in English, 2019) and CNTI Progress professional retraining and upgrade centre (Mastership of Interpreting refresher course, 2019). They arrange short-term professional upgrade courses that last from 40 to 72 hours.

Below are two educational establishments that differ from those mentioned above. The Military University of the Russian Defence Ministry (VUMORF) is a military educational establishment with the mission to provide linguistic support for the Russian Armed Forces. The Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University) represents educational establishments that provide a wide range of translation/interpretation, including simultaneous, training programmes under principal educational programme.

The VUMORF history has been mentioned before. At present, VUMORF is a leading training centre for translation/interpretation experts in the interests of the Russian MoD and, subsequently, for other services and agencies. VUMORF cadets undergo
translation/interpretation practice both in Russia and abroad. It demonstrates special motivation and determination of the students. Simultaneous interpretation was trained at this educational establishment in various historical periods and was closely connected with them. It was done under the supervision of such military simultaneous interpreters as Mikhail Zwilling and Anatoly Shiryaev. The methodology for simultaneous interpretation training developed by M. Shiryaev was the basis for its training at the VUMORF for many years. And it is still relevant. This methodology, as we now clearly see, incorporated all best practices in the sphere of simultaneous interpretation training developed by both Russian linguists and foreign theorists and practitioners, first of all, by Danica Seleskovitch and Marianne Lederer. However, it did not lead to the emergence at VUMORF of a simultaneous interpretation school.

The dissolution of the Soviet Union followed by the overall degradation in the country affected VUMORF as well (at that time, it was Military Red Banner Institute of the Defence Ministry, VKIMO). Military interpreters seemed to be of no need for the state and to be replaced by civilians. Such an idea was voiced at a very high level. And it was only in 2013, only six years ago, that a new impetus was given to training interpreters at VUMORF. Recently, it was instructed to set up its own military simultaneous interpretation school and to train simultaneous interpreters for the defence Ministry. However, it is not easy to accomplish this mission in a short term, especially taking into account the absence of the practising experts.

Currently, the main approach is being developed to set up such a simultaneous interpretation school. At the first stage, obviously, experienced interpreters will be sent to study simultaneous interpretation at Moscow universities, while adopting experience of teaching this kind of interpretation at the same time. Subsequently, the interpreters that underwent training will be able to provide simultaneous interpretation training themselves.
At present, the VUMORF specialist educational programme lays the foundation for training simultaneous interpreters in the future. At the third year, cadets study written translation, at sight and phrasal interpretation. The fourth year focuses mainly on consecutive interpretation. During this year, cadets actively practise their interpretation skills being involved to linguistic support in Russia and abroad. At the fifth year, they master all their translation/interpretation skills. After the graduation, young specialists will be chosen for further training as simultaneous interpreters at VUMORF.

The RUDN University provides simultaneous interpretation training under the “Methodology of linguistic training. Linguistic studies. Simultaneous Interpretation” master programme (two years). Besides simultaneous interpretation, master students acquire the skills for linguistic analysis of oral and written speech, scientific and pedagogical activities at all educational levels, for applying modern language and culture training techniques. Special attention is paid to providing relevant practice, including on simultaneous interpretation, to the master students. As a result, after the completion of the programme the graduates can professionally use two foreign languages and work as interpreters, simultaneous interpreters and teachers. They can also be in demand in various spheres.

Discussion

After analyzing the activities in major linguistic centres of the Russian Federation, it is obvious that simultaneous interpretation training is, mainly, done under professional retraining or upgrade programmes. The duration of such training varies from several weeks to several years. It drastically differ from the situation in Western Europe where the process of training simultaneous interpreters is generally arranged under principal educational programmes, often master ones.

We assume that taking such a special course as simultaneous interpretation out of the principal educational process (bachelor, master, specialist programmes) is likely to be caused by the fact
that the simultaneous interpreter training has, in general, a modular nature and is designed for already professional interpreters. It is substantiated by the fact that, in most cases, before being accepted for the programme, the applicants undergo entrance tests. In other words, such special training requires thorough selection, which helps to save time on training and the resources on hand. However, in this context, it is noteworthy that most educational establishments take fees for simultaneous interpretation training, which flunks out those who are not serious enough and to canalize the training process onto those interpreters who are genuinely interested and motivated.

Despite the abovementioned approach of some educational establishments towards teaching simultaneous interpretation, we should note that a number of establishments have assumed Western European practice. They provide simultaneous interpretation training under principal educational programmes (mainly, master ones). In this context, a question arises: how do they select candidates for the master programme taking into account the training of such a complicated kind of interpretation as simultaneous interpretation?

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, we note that under the conditions of quickly evolving world and educational technologies, it is of paramount importance to have mutually advantageous cooperation between higher educational establishments to exchange best practices and to train high quality professionals for our countries.

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