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Editorial

The Theoretical and Practical Aspects of Teaching Conference Interpretation: 30 Years Later (1989-2019)

From the very beginning, research on conference interpreting has been oriented towards didactics and training. Herbert's *Handbook*, Rozan's consecutive note-taking manual or Paneth's Master Thesis, *An Investigation into Conference Interpreting*, all addressed interpreter training as a result of personal experience in the profession and as trainers. Didactic reflections are at the core of the interpretative theory of the Paris School, Giles's Efforts models, and the different cognitive models or neurolinguistics approaches that followed. *The Theoretical and Practical Aspects of Teaching Conference Interpreting* was the title of the Symposium held in Trieste in 1986 that led to new lines of empirical studies for simultaneous and consecutive interpreting. Sound scientific foundations were required at the time to develop the new discipline of Interpreting Studies in search of an autonomous status. Thirty years have elapsed since the publication in 1989 of the selected papers of the Trieste Symposium by John Dodds and Laura Gran, and in the meantime the interpreting landscape has changed dramatically. In particular, Public Service Interpreting (PSI) has entered the scene and a considerable amount of research work is devoted to the various interpreting forms and settings. Technology has also come into play with software and devices that are having an impact on the profession and seem to require specialised training or at least some adjustments to existing courses.

This issue features four articles covering different aspects of interpreter training and may give an indication of the way in which things have been changing. The first contribution, by José Conde and Fanny Chouc, is a detailed account of the benefits of multilingual mock conferences in training. A study was carried

out with conference interpreting students taking part in weekly simulations of multilingual conferences with all the language combinations taught across the programme. Students were interviewed to gather information about their experience and its benefits for learning, with particular reference to situations where they did not have a working knowledge of all the languages used. In this case, they would have the opportunity to act as interpreting end users evaluating the interpretation from a real communicative point of view.

Almudena Nevado Llopis and Alina Pelea describe and evaluate a training module in PSI and medical interpreting for conference interpreting students in their first and second years. The research questions concern the additional skills to be taught to prepare conference interpreting students for PSI settings, the duration of the module and what type of information is most needed. A comparison between the interpreting performances delivered by trained master students and those delivered by untrained undergraduate students give important indications in this respect.

How to teach interpreting students to deal with numbers and what kind of training could be developed to address this common problem-trigger for interpreters is the topic of Francesca Frittella's contribution. On the basis of research findings, she presents a constructivist, skill-based training programme aiming at developing competence in the simultaneous interpretation of numbers. The article describes the theoretical foundations of the training programme and the way in which the instructional design supports the learning process. It also highlights the potential of research in the field of instructional design to advance interpreting pedagogy. Two groups of interpreting trainees participated in the training programme and provided unstructured written feedback. The responses were analysed by qualitative thematic analysis.

Finally, the article by Arianna Fichera gives an overview of how the work at the EU has changed since 1989 when *The Theoretical and Practical Aspects of Teaching Conference Interpretation* was published. The article is based on the experience of the Italian booth at DG SCIC. It describes the evolution of interpreting over the past three decades and identifies, from an EU perspective, the main challenges to be met by interpreting departments and their students, from language combinations including several C languages to interpretation from non-standard English. These are tough challenges for young interpreters wishing to embark upon a career at the EU, but, as Fichera states, "Acquiring all the technical skills required to be an interpreter and learning to work under pressure may seem daunting for first year interpreting students, but generations of interpreters that have gone on to work for international institutions have proven that it is a reachable goal."

We hope you will enjoy this issue. *Buona lettura!*

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