

# Thematic Network Project in the area of Languages

## Sub-project 7: Translation and Interpreting

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### FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Sub-project 7: Translation and Interpreting

Final Recommendations

Appendix to the Final Report for Year Three

## Thematic Network Project in the area of Languages (1996-1999)

### Sub-project 7: Translation and Interpreting

#### Final recommendations

The ongoing development of global communication has made the role of translators and interpreters more important than ever. Increasing mobility and interaction across borders have created a great demand for effective intercultural communication in all European languages, including those which are less widely spoken and which are becoming increasingly important on the European or international arena.

It is thus of vital importance to develop the professional training of translators and interpreters in order to promote the European determination to foster unity through diversity and maintain the cultural richness in multi-lingual diversity.

Translation and interpreting are professions in their own right, requiring special training programmes geared to the professional needs of the translators and interpreters while keeping the scientific underpinnings of a university degree course as well as separate research activities.

The Scientific Committee on Translation and Interpreting (sub-project # 7) has produced a set of national status quo and needs reports on the training of translators and interpreters in the present EU, recommendations for course profiles for the disciplines of Translation, Conference Interpreting and Public Service Interpreting at university level as well as a report on the Training of Trainers in Interpreting. This documentation formed the background for a set of workshops run at the 2<sup>nd</sup> European Language Council conference in Jyväskylä , Finland, 1-3 July 1999, with the following themes:

- ◆ Translation in a global market
- ◆ Public service interpreting
- ◆ Training for a wider European Market. Translation and Interpreting in Eastern and Central Europe

A fourth workshop was run on the special CDA project, *The joint development of a university programme at advanced level (master's type) in Conference Interpreting*. Though there has been fruitful links between the TNP sub-project and the CDA project, the CDA project has not been part of the work of the Scientific Committee on Translation and Interpreting. The CDA project and subsequent piloting has been run by a consortium of universities in conjunction with the European Commission's Joint Interpreting and Conference Service (JICS) and the Directorate for Interpreting of the European Parliament as well as DGXXII / SOCRATES.

As a result of the work of the sub-project on Translation and Interpreting (T&I) as well as the conference workshops, the Scientific Committee states that:

- ◆ T&I are disciplines in their own right; language courses are not an integral part of, but a prerequisite for, courses in translation and/or interpreting.
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- ◆ The T&I student must have a sufficient level of linguistic as well as cultural and inter-cultural skills before entering a T&I course.
- ◆ While young people of today may be characterised as an image-oriented rather than a text-oriented generation, T&I are primarily text-based disciplines. This has implications for the pedagogical principles applied in the training of translators and interpreters and must influence the development of T&I curricula and syllabi.
- ◆ As a consequence of the above, and as a consequence of the fact that new T&I courses are rapidly developing in the CEE applicant countries, there is a need for the development of quality teacher training courses.
- ◆ New technologies are an integral part of the T&I disciplines as tools in the T&I processes as well as primary media of T&I activities (screen translation, video-conference interpreting, etc.).
- ◆ In the very near future the challenges of the T&I disciplines will be to accommodate the diversity of languages and the diversity of settings in T&I courses run by academically qualified as well as professionally qualified teachers.

The discussion in the workshops were centred around the following questions:

*1. How can we identify new needs in the T&I market on a continuing basis?*

No organisation can carry out development work in all areas of T&I training. Networking and a pooling of expertise, including close interaction between the academic world and the professional environment, is therefore absolutely necessary.

*In order to monitor the development of the professions and co-ordinate new initiatives in T&I research as well as the training of translators and interpreters, it is recommended that a standing committee be established to form the meeting ground for co-operation between the universities, the professional organisations as well as the language industry.*

*2. How can we provide for a flexible institutional framework that integrates practical and academic needs on a continuing basis?*

Changes in the curricula are often necessary due to rapid and constant changes in society and the professions. One aspect of this is the fact that T&I studies must be international in order for the T&I graduates of tomorrow to meet the challenges of the professional world. In order to instigate such changes without too much delay, the legal framework of university courses must be flexible.

*It is therefore recommended that institutional and national authorities provide the necessary flexibility in the legal framework and otherwise in order for those responsible for the T&I courses to react to the development needs identified in co-operation with the professional environment.*

It goes without saying that no university can follow the development closely in all fields and a division of labour is necessary.

*It is therefore recommended that the universities co-operate among themselves as well as with the professional environment and the organisations to launch new curriculum development projects and new European degrees to cater for the needs of the market identified e.g. by the standing committee.*

*3. What are the most immediate needs and what are the long-term needs for change?*

Despite a long tradition for co-operation among T&I institutes in Europe, there is still marked differences between the status and quality of the T&I training offered in the individual member countries. In order to remedy this situation, it is absolutely necessary that quality education is provided by all T&I centres.

*It is therefore recommended that T&I training be recognised only as a university degree course with the academic underpinnings and research activities traditionally connected to such courses, and that the course profiles, recommended by the Scientific Committee, be adopted.*

With the diversification of the market and the development of information and communication technology (ICT), a whole range of new skills are needed. No university can specialise in all fields, especially because T&I units are traditionally relatively small with a limited number of permanent staff.

*It is therefore recommended that new courses and course modules be developed at institutional, national and European level, and that European funding is provided for such CDA activities in order to facilitate the foreseen development of a multi-lingual Europe.*

Professional translators or interpreters have all been trained under different conditions than those currently governing the professions.

*New curricula should therefore not only be launched for full-time university courses; the new development should also be applied in modules of in-house training, ODL, or other types of lifelong learning activities.*

It goes without saying that new developments are not possible unless the teaching staff is properly trained. It is a well-known fact that many T&I teachers are either academics with too little knowledge of the professions or professionals with too little knowledge of the academic aspects of university courses. The sub-project on the training of T&I trainers is a valuable step towards better training of T&I trainers.

As there are relatively few T&I teachers in each member country, and because expertise in this field is limited, *it is recommended that the training of T&I trainers be further developed at European level.*

As a consequence of the recent political and economic developments in Central and Eastern Europe as well as the Baltic States, new courses in T&I are rapidly developing in order for these countries to meet the requirements for T&I services. It goes without saying that the same quality standards as the best of

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those known in the present EU member countries should also be applied in the applicant countries.

In order for this to be possible, close co-operation is needed in all fields of T&I training across Europe. Institutes in all European countries can benefit from exchanges of expertise, and all workshop participants declared a strong interest in future co-operation within curriculum development, mobility and teachers training as well as other research and development activities.

*It is therefore recommended that joint European projects (CDA, student and staff mobility, research and development) be instigated with participants from EU member countries as well as EU applicant countries.*

*It is further recommended that course profiles for translation and interpreting as well as the following set of guidelines for T&I training be adopted as a minimum requirement for all T&I training in the applicant countries:*

## **TRANSLATOR AND INTERPRETER TRAINING IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE AND THE BALTIC STATES**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS ADOPTED BY THE 2nd ELC CONFERENCE, JYVÄSKYLÄ, FINLAND, JULY 1-3, 1999**

- ◆ That Translation and Interpretation should be taught as subject areas in their own right, clearly distinct from general language and literature programmes, and, whenever possible, under the responsibility of a separate T&I department or school.
- ◆ That governments and academic institutions should be encouraged to recognise and to implement specific Translation and Interpreting qualifications both at undergraduate and postgraduate level.
- ◆ That Translation and Interpreting programmes should cover at least four semesters, with the aim of extending this to six or eight semesters whenever feasible.
- ◆ That the course profiles recommended by the TNP Scientific Committee on Translation and Interpreting should be recognised as the basis for translator and interpreter training whenever applicable and practical within the national and local context.
- ◆ That given the specific nature of the translation and interpretation market in CEE countries and the Baltic States, and given the new demands which will arise from EU enlargement, all graduates should be proficient in "retour" translation and interpreting (i.e. A language => B language).
- ◆ That all Translation and Interpreting programmes should include practical experience in professional translation or interpreting, e.g. through work placements.

- ◆ That every effort should be made by EU institutions and national governments to support the development of study programmes through student and staff mobility, joint curriculum development projects as well as other research and development projects.
- ◆ That Translation and Interpreting should be taught by specialists with significant work experience, and, whenever possible, relevant academic qualifications in their particular field, and that research in the field of translation and interpretation studies be given full academic recognition in order to encourage the recruitment of such specialist staff.