



universität
wien

MASTERARBEIT / MASTER'S THESIS

Titel der Masterarbeit / Title of the Master's Thesis

“Becoming a Romanian Interpreter: A comparative study
of students’ experiences in Vienna and Cluj-Napoca”

verfasst von / submitted by

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angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts (MA)

Wien, 2023 / Vienna, 2023

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme code as it appears on
the student record sheet:

UA 070 354 331

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme as it appears on
the student record sheet:

Masterstudium Translation UG2002

Rumänisch

Deutsch

Betreut von / Supervisor:

Univ.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Franz Pöchhacker

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List of Abbreviations

AIIC	Association Internationale des Interprètes de Conférence
BA	Bachelor of Arts
CIUTI	Conférence Internationale Permanente d'Instituts Universitaires de Traducteurs et Interprètes
DA	Disciplină de aprofundare
DG LINC	Directorate-General for Logistics and Interpretation for Conferences
DG SCIC	Directorate-General Service Commun Interprétation-Conférences
DSIN	Disciplină de sinteză
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
EMCI	European Masters in Conference Interpreting
EU	European Union
HEC	École des hautes études commerciales
ISIT	Institut supérieur d'interprétation et traduction
KD	Konferenzdolmetschen
LMA	Limbi Moderne Aplicate
MA	Master of Arts
MEFIC	Master European pentru Formarea Interpreților de Conferință
MEIC	Master European Interpretare de Conferință
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NPI	Nicht prüfungsimmanent
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PI	Prüfungsimmanent
SE	Seminar
UBB	Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai
UE	Übung
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VO	Vorlesung
VU	Vorlesung mit Übung
ZTW	Zentrum für Translationswissenschaft

1. Introduction

In a globalized world in which the role of cultural mediation has become crucial for safeguarding the interests of individuals, local communities or international organizations, it is no surprise that interpreter education has grown in volume and economic importance, especially during the latter half of the twentieth century (Snell-Hornby 1998: 32). In the twenty years between 1960 and 1980, the number of university-level institutions offering degrees in translation or interpreting rose from 49 to 80. By 1994, it had increased to more than 250 (Caminade & Pym 1998: 283). The institutional settings in which interpreters and translators are educated are shaped by very specific political, cultural, legislative, and market-specific constellations in their country and region of the world (Snell-Hornby 1998: 32). In addition, official curricula are shaped by many entities, including public institutions, policymakers, ministries, the media, the private sector, and direct participants, such as instructors, students, and alumni (Freihoff 1995: 150). A result of this phenomenon is the large variety of curriculum models that have emerged and that differ significantly from one another, even within Western Europe (Sawyer 2004: 1). The challenge within curriculum research consists of the lack of reliability when it comes to sources. Since many of these documents are developed within individual programs and departments, even when internal documents are available to the public, they are often limited to a structure rather than a detailed description of how the curriculum is implemented and experienced (Sawyer 2004: 2). Freihoff even states that the only curriculum with practical impact is the curriculum that exists in the minds of the participants, i.e., the hidden curriculum (1995: 152).

Having studied at Babeş-Bolyai University for my Bachelor's degree and at the University of Vienna for my Master's, and having seen how different approaches towards teaching and learning conference interpreting are implemented in these institutions, represented the incentive for taking a closer look into the way each program is experienced by other students.

The present study aims to take a closer look at the hidden curriculum from the perspective of conference interpreting students having Romanian as their first language. Different educational traditions and concepts will be examined and compared on the basis of two different curricula. The two educational institutions to be examined are Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, Romania and the University of Vienna, in Austria, both of which offer Master's degrees in conference interpreting. Since the nature of the educational

institutions themselves is an essential element for curriculum design that differs based on national traditions and frameworks, it is the purpose of this thesis to examine the academic experiences of interpreting students having Romanian as their A language¹ and to draw a comparison between studying in the country of the native language and a foreign country.

Therefore, based on the comparison of the two official curricula for the Master's programs in Conference Interpreting in Vienna and Cluj-Napoca and the experiences of six former and current students enrolled in these programs, the main questions this research aims to answer are: How does studying conference interpreting outside the country of the native language shape the experience of future professionals for the Romanian language? What are the advantages and disadvantages of studying in a foreign country when it comes to the improvement of interpreting skills in the mother tongue and in a second or third language? How do curricula and expectations differ from one country to another? Each of these initial questions was taken into consideration in the process of developing the interview guide that represents the backbone of this thesis.

The focus will be directed towards the two curricula and how these affect the amount of training for students at the two above-mentioned institutions. The "hidden curriculum" will be closely examined on the basis of semi-structured interviews, in order to understand what aspects of the official curriculum differ in their implementation and what problems may or may not occur within each program. The "hidden" part of the curriculum is to be understood in terms of contextual factors and organizational structures that influence the process of curriculum design and its outcomes (Pöchhacker 2019: 150).

Structurally, this paper aims to gradually introduce the reader to the subject at hand by offering a few historical accounts regarding the profession, the development of different training programs, currents and doctrines and the establishment of field-specific institutions such as the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC), the International Standing Conference of University Institutes of Translators and Interpreters (CIUTI) and the European Masters in Conference Interpreting (EMCI). The fundamental aspects of curriculum will be discussed, as well as the main curriculum models for conference interpreter training. In order to be able to draw a comparison between the two institutions, a detailed description of the content of the current curricular documents of Babeş-Bolyai University and the University

¹ The 'A' language is the interpreter's mother tongue (or its strict equivalent) into which they work from all their other working languages in both consecutive and simultaneous interpretation. It is the language they speak best, and in which they can easily express even complicated ideas. It is therefore an active language for the interpreter (AIIC 2019).

of Vienna will be presented. The results of this empirical work consist of the descriptive accounts presented in the second part of this paper. Based on these accounts, the final discussion aims to answer the research question by addressing the main issues that emerged from the student interviews, offering solutions that could help potential interpreting students make a conscientious choice between the two programs.

2. Conference Interpreter Training

In order to set a theoretical framework for the interview study and discuss aspects of the development of training, I will now describe a few milestones in interpreter education. Starting with the early development of the profession, I will describe the first attempts towards interpreting pedagogy and mention some of the most important institutions that determined the way the profession is regarded today.

2.1. Development of the Profession

Professionalized interpreting goes back centuries in different societies and the history of interpreting is built every day (Baigorri-Jalón et al. 2022: 9). In this sense it is important to distinguish between the history of the practice of conference interpreting and the history of its path towards a fully-fledged profession, although both perspectives may intersect in the historical account (Baigorri-Jalón et al. 2022: 10). The profession as we know it would not exist without the increasing regulation and recognition of qualifications set either by interpreters themselves or by their social milieu.

After the Second World War, there was a significant increase in the need for professional conference interpreters. In 1919, with The Treaty of Versailles, French was overruled as the main language used as a means of communication and, with the number of international conferences increasing between 1920 and 1946, the profession became more and more relevant for the times (Baigorri-Jalón et al. 2022: 11). Later, a group of interpreters was formed at the League of Nations, and with the assistance of the International Labor Organization (ILO), a few independent interpreters were able to negotiate paid preparation time, reimbursement for travel costs, and payment for each day, which resulted in important changes that contributed to the consolidation of the profession (Baigorri-Jalón et al. 2022: 11).

It was at the ILO where simultaneous interpreting was tested in 1925 and 1926 and where the first course on this interpreting mode was organized in 1928, in order to recruit interpreters for that year's conference (Baigorri-Jalón 2014).

Russian was evolving into the language of the global communist movement as English became the new lingua franca in the West. Taking note of Western practices, Soviet interpreters' working conditions also improved between the 1928 Comintern Congress, and the

6th KIM (Communist International of the Youth) Congress in 1935, with interpreter wages exceeding the average wage of the Russian worker at the time (Chernov 2016: 140).

In 1925, Dr. V.Z. Epshtein, a Russian medical doctor, offered a truly revolutionary approach to dealing with the problem of concurrent speaking and listening when having to interpret simultaneously (Chernov 2016: 141). According to his plan, three people were responsible for interpreting, with each interpreter working in very small segments, switching after every sentence, and having enough time to render his section in a way somewhere between consecutive and simultaneous (Chernov 2016: 142). This system was then implemented at the 1928 Comintern Congress. It allowed interpreters to concentrate on rendering segments without being distracted by the original speech and provided control over the size of the segment they would be comfortable interpreting. The downside of not hearing the entire discourse was a severe lack of context that would have a negative effect on interpreting quality. Although the quality of the microphones at the time largely concealed the variations in the pitch of the interpreters' voices, it would seem that having to listen to three different people speak one sentence at a time while using different renderings of the same concept must have been distracting for the audience (Chernov 2016: 143).

The technical design of the system and the improvement performed in the three years leading up to the congress produced a very sophisticated system very closely resembling a modern simultaneous interpreting arrangement as we know it today. The first simultaneous interpreting system in the West basically consisted of a set of headphones and dials that allowed users hear trained interpreters render speeches in real time (Seeber 2021: 18). This system was created by Alan Gordon Finlay and patented by Edward Filene. The system was set up and utilized for the first time at the League of Nations in 1931. It allowed listeners to dial in to their native language and hear speeches that had already been translated read aloud alongside the original text (Seeber 2021: 18).

The Filene-Finlay experiments in Geneva were known to the Soviets, who were keeping an eye on the advances as they prepared to organize a significant international conference in Moscow (Chernov 2016: 151). In order to demonstrate the success of the new government, the Soviets needed to show that they shared all of the same characteristics as the West in the modern era. According to the *Krasnaya Niva* magazine's headline from 1928, Epshtein's invention was used "at the service of the communist revolution." (Chernov 2016: 151).

The interpreters from the 1935 KIM Congress painted a typical interpreter profile of the era. Early Soviet interpreters were either Russian-born individuals who studied foreign languages, individuals who were bilingual, or individuals who learned foreign languages

through travel. Most interpreters lacked a college education, they were not Party members, they were frequently Jews, and many of them were female (Chernov 2016: 161). Only a few interpreters who served in Nuremberg had an education in the field of interpreting, coming from schools where only the consecutive mode was taught. The remaining individuals lacked specialized training, but all of them showed enough talent and resilience to assist in the transition from an international military court to an international organization (Baigorri-Jalón et al. 2022: 12).

These examples of historical landmarks show the multilinear evolution of interpreting and the role played by translation and interpreting in making world history.

2.2. Development of Training

The Higher Foreign Language Courses, a Moscow institution connected to the Library of Foreign Literature, was the one providing language instruction in the Soviet Union prior to 1930 (Chernov 2016: 161). These courses were then transformed into the Maurice Thorez Institute of Foreign Languages, the first institution to offer education degrees in languages. The Institute had two sections between 1930 and 1933: Translation and Teacher Training. The Translation Branch was shut down in 1933, when the country “began to close its doors to foreigners” (Chernov 2016: 161). Some of the initial trainers were not professional language instructors but foreigners whose main value was being native speakers. The Translation Branch was reopened as the Department of Translation in 1942 due to the increase in need for military interpreters and translators (Chernov 2016: 161).

The 1940s saw the establishment of numerous official training programs across Europe (Geneva 1941, Vienna 1943, Garmersheim 1947, Saarbrücken 1948, and Heidelberg 1950). However, it is hard to determine when the literature on interpreting pedagogy started, firstly because it is very broad, and secondly because it often overlaps with related areas of study through its multidisciplinary nature. There are three well-known monographs from the early post-war period that have achieved the status of classics, however with these documents being now over six decades old, their primary nature is that of historical documents.

Since the 1980s, the desire to establish a strong framework for interpreting instruction has grown quickly. As a result, various theories have been developed. Principles and techniques used to teach conference interpreters at the *École Supérieure d'Interprètes et de Traducteurs* (ESIT) of the University Paris III Sorbonne Nouvelle are explained in Seleskovitch and

Lederer's *La pédagogie raisonnée de l'interprétation* (1989). Freihoff (1995) was among the early authors to introduce concepts such as open and closed curriculum models and the official and hidden curriculum. These curriculum models for conference interpreting began to intersect through the establishment of a European Masters in Conference Interpreting (EMCI) in 2001.

Additional areas will become clear if we look more closely at the variety of curriculum and examination standards within the Conférence Internationale Permanente des Instituts Universitaires de Traducteurs et Interprètes (CIUTI). For example, final examinations in consecutive interpreting range between five and fifteen minutes at member institutes (CIUTI 1999).

Curriculum has therefore evolved to adjust to new needs and requirements. In the late 1990s, with the Bologna Accords came the structural harmonization of the European higher education system through the introduction of Bachelor and Master of Arts degrees and with the rise of China on the world stage, interpreter and translator education became even more relevant as it led to an even wider introduction of Bachelor and Master of Arts degrees as well as PhD programs in interpreting (Sawyer 2015: 99).

2.3. AIIC

The International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) was founded in 1953 as a result of a commitment to ensure that the contribution provided by interpreters to the expanding number of international conferences, organizations, conventions, and treaties was widely acknowledged (AIIC 2022b).

The association sought to establish a global association of employed and independent conference interpreters who would concur on professional standards, choose their own working conditions, and uphold a code of ethics. AIIC had its Constituent Assembly on November 11, 1953. Their approach was informed by solidarity, which led to AIIC becoming both a professional association and a trade union. To ensure that members of AIIC were obligated to uphold the confidentiality of all of the proceedings at which they provided interpretation, a Code of Professional Ethics was adopted early on. Membership in the organization was a guarantee of professionalism. The AIIC Interpreters Directory still uses the language classification system, which distinguishes between active (A or B) and passive (C) languages in consecutive or simultaneous interpreting. Its professional rules, status and code of conduct and honor are regarded as quality standards at the international level. If we examine the

language classifications in more detail, it can be stated that AIIC distinguishes between active and passive working languages: The A and B language(s) are active and the C language(s) are passive languages. Per definition, the AIIC considers the A language to be:

“the interpreter's native language (or another language strictly equivalent to a native language), into which the interpreter works from all her or his other languages generally in both modes of interpretation, simultaneous and consecutive. All members must have at least one ‘A’ language but may have more than one.” (AIIC 2021)

The B language is defined as “a language in which the interpreter is perfectly fluent” (AIIC 2021). At the same time, the B language is

“a language other than the interpreter's native language, of which she or he has a perfect command and into which she or he works from one or more of her or his other languages. Some interpreters work into a 'B' language in only one of the two modes of interpretation.” (AIIC 2022a)

The AIIC definition of C languages is: “Languages of which the interpreter has a complete understanding and from which she or he works” (AIIC 2022a). It is interesting to note that in the case of the A and B languages, it is a question of one language (“the interpreter's native language” or “a language”), while in the case of the C language the word is used in its plural form (“languages”). This suggests that it is assumed that interpreters with more than one A or B language are rather the exception. At the same time, it is assumed that interpreters have more than one C language. Through these definitions, the “typical” conference interpreter would have to be a person that has one A language, one B language and several C languages.

Anton Klevansky, a conference interpreter and AIIC member published some statistics on the ‘average’ profile of an AIIC conference interpreter in 2022. According to him 2680 (88,74%) of the active members have one A language, 336 (11,13%) have two, and 4 members (0,13%) have three A languages (Klevansky 2021). Out of 55 different A languages, the top ten are French with 712 members, English, Spanish, German, Italian, Portuguese, Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Greek with 45 members (Klevansky 2021). According to Klevansky, this is not surprising given the amount of work required to maintain a B language, as only 2012 members (66.62%) have three B languages, while 206 (6.82%) have two. The top B languages are English with 1355 members, French with 563, German with 156, Spanish with 136, Italian

with 68, Russian with 29, Portuguese with 26, Dutch with 12, Swedish – 11 and Arabic, 9. The total number of interpreters with at least one C language is 1873, with 793 (26,26%) of them having only one C language, but also one member with 8 C languages and two with 7. Two or three C languages are however the norm, with 530 (17,55%) and 347 (11,49) members having them, respectively (Klevansky 2021).

It is also significant that the AIIC definition merely specifies that the A language must be the interpreter's "native language" or "another language exactly equal to a native language", while the B language must be "a language different than the interpreter's native language." Neither the definition of "native language", nor the concept of a "strictly equivalent" language is further explained.

The addition that "some interpreters work into a B language in only one of the two modes of interpretation" is also intended to distinguish between the A and the B language. According to this, it is absolutely legitimate for some interpreters to work exclusively into their B language in one mode of interpreting, while they usually ("generally") work into their A language in both modes of interpreting. It is also made explicit that some interpreters even work from more than one language into their B language ("from one or more of her or his other languages"). In contrast, interpreting into the A language is done from all other languages without exception ("from all her or his other languages") (AIIC 2022a).

In this regard, Klevansky notes that 181 (15,26%) of the members with at least one B and one C language interpret from C to B, and 57 (27,67%) interpreters of those with two Bs operate between them. Out of the 458 different combinations, the most popular ones are some combinations between French, English, Spanish and German.

The AIIC definition of a B language is not clear enough for didactic purposes. However, this is true not only for interpreting didactics, but also for other areas of interpreting. The comparison of the AIIC definitions shows that the demarcation between a B language and a C language is quite clear: B language is interpreted into, C language is not. However, if interpreters work into a language of which they have a "perfect" command from all other working languages in both modes of interpreting, the question that should be raised at this point is: when is it considered an A language and when is it considered a B language? Similarly, Gorton raised the question: How exactly does this language differ from the interpreter's native A language if the interpreter is supposed to be "perfectly fluent" in the B language, except from perhaps a slight foreign accent? What criteria have to be met for a language to be considered a B language? (2012: 74).

The phrase “native language” or “another language strictly equivalent to a native language” appears to have the solution to this issue. It may well be that the “native language” - understood here in the truest sense of the word as the language that “a person learns as a child (from their parents)” - is not the strongest language of all interpreters. Given the scope of this paper, different forms of language acquisition such as bilingualism and multilingualism will not be discussed. Instead, it should only be noted that the AIIC definitions, even if useful for certain purposes, simplify a very complex reality and cannot take into account the individual language biographies of interpreters.

According to the AIIC directory, there are nine active members of AIIC who have Romanian as their A language and English as one of their working languages. Six of them have French in their language combination, five of them have German and only two of them have Spanish or Hungarian (AIIC Directory).

Another important merit of AIIC is creating a curricular model for conference interpreter training. Today's most effective conference interpreter training programs adhere to a “standard model” (Mackintosh 1989) that came into place between 1959 and 1960 when four universities (Geneva, Heidelberg, HEC, and the Sorbonne in Paris) decided to set up training programs that would meet a number of important requirements outlined by AIIC. The association then recognized their diplomas as of 1963, situating them among the leading schools in terms of reputation and perceived quality to this day, making them not only the historical standard-setters but also the most robust and longstanding conference interpreting schools over time (AIIC 2022b).

2.4. CIUTI

In the light of the increasing demand for competent translators and interpreters, the translation and interpreting institutes of the universities of Geneva, Heidelberg, Mainz/Germersheim, Paris-Sorbonne, Saarbücken and Trieste initiated a translation and interpreting quality circle that developed into a worldwide association (CIUTI 2022). The *Conférence Internationale Permanente d'Instituts Universitaires pour la formation de Traducteurs et Interprètes* was founded in Trieste in 1964 after its guidelines were initially drafted in 1962 at a meeting in Vienna, revised in Paris in 1963, and eventually adopted in Trieste in 1964 (CIUTI). The association's mission was to advance the education of qualified conference interpreters and translators who, in accordance with the Guidelines for New

Membership, would be prepared to enter the workforce after completing their studies (CIUTI 2022).

Comprising institutes in Belgium, Denmark, and England as well as a program in Washington, DC, and another in Montreal, CIUTI had 13 members by 1973. However, CIUTI's activities at the time were limited to Europe. CIUTI developed ongoing official and unofficial links with these numerous European Community bodies as more nations joined the organization and more official languages were utilized in its institutions. As an organization interacting with the European Community, CIUTI acquired legal status on November 24, 1994 and became recognized under Belgian law as an international organization under the name *Conférence Internationale Permanente d'Instituts Universitaires de Traducteurs et Interprètes* (CIUTI 2022).

CIUTI had mainly been a European organization up until this moment. The 1976 United Nations Recommendation on the Legal Protection of Translators and Translations has since been updated and endorsed. These guidelines outline the requirements needed to raise the prestige of translators, not only for the benefit of the industry but also for the benefit of global understanding, the exchange of cultural values, and, in particular, the advancement of the sciences, technology, and the economy. Incorporating the International Federation of Translators Charter, which asks for the acknowledgement of translation as a unique, autonomous profession in today's world, is another crucial goal for CIUTI (CIUTI 2022).

In present days, CIUTI is addressing how cultural differences impact translation and interpreting curricula around the world. The institution positions itself as a major actor in the global domain of translation and interpreting training, and has forged solid relations with the professional world of translation and interpreting. The International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) and other major international organizations that employ translators and interpreters are given the opportunity to speak at the General Assembly each year. Currently, CIUTI has members from Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Canada, China, Czechia, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Korea, Lebanon, Peru, Poland, Russia, Slovenia, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States of America (CIUTI 2022).

CIUTI membership represents a distinct seal of quality for the University of Vienna, as it requires the fulfillment of strict quality criteria.

2.5. EMCI

The European Master's in Conference Interpreting (EMCI) training program's foundation was laid in 1997 by a consortium of universities working with the EU on a project that established its fundamental concepts, objectives, levels of difficulty, and quality standards. Currently, a group of 16 universities known as the European Master's in Conference Interpreting offers advanced postgraduate training in conference interpreting. These universities are: Paris ISIT, Paris ESIT, FTI Geneva, Forlì/Bologna, Trieste, ELTE Budapest, Warsaw, Cluj, Istanbul, Ljubljana, Madrid, La Laguna, Leuven/campus Brussels, St. Petersburg, Stockholm and Prague. Its activities benefit from financial support from the Directorate-General for Interpretation (DG SCIC) and the Directorate-General for Logistics and Interpretation for Conferences (DG LINC), the interpreter service providers of the European Commission and the European Parliament (EMCI 2022).

Through their pedagogical support programs, online classes, and attendance at final exams, the General Directorates for Interpreting of the European Commission and the European Parliament participate in training. In addition, every year a trip to Brussels offers students the chance to practice in silent booths at both institutions (EMCI 2022).

Members of this consortium agree upon a common policy on student recruitment and assessment, based on the objectives of the program and quality assurance criteria. The curriculum plan adheres to the generally accepted order of instruction, starting with consecutive interpreting and sight translation in the early phase and moving on to an introduction to simultaneous interpreting before teaching simultaneous with text and interpreting of specialized texts. The final stages of the curriculum are completed by courses in professional ethics (Sawyer 2015: 99).

Since the EU is seeking to recruit qualified translators for its institutions, the EMCI devotes particular attention to lesser-known and less-taught languages. The Czech Republic (particularly the Institute of Translation Studies, Charles University) and Hungary (Budapest University) were the first members of the Consortium in Central and Eastern Europe. They were joined by Warsaw in 2001/2002 and by Cluj in 2007/2008 (EMCI 2022).

The participating institutions bind themselves to assess changing circumstances on a regular basis in order to uphold their commitment to excellence in interpreter training as outlined in the EMCI Quality Assurance Standards (EMCI 2012).

This seal of quality is of particular relevance since Babeş-Bolyai University is the only Romanian University with this qualification that involves rigorous quality assessment.

2.6. Tradition and Innovation

The literature on conference interpreting pedagogy demonstrates that factors like small sample sizes, high individual variability, the transient nature of live performance data, and the absence of statistics on student outcomes make it difficult to compare the effectiveness of various training methods (Setton & Dawrant 2016b). Many of the teaching strategies advocated by early instructors have been incorporated into modern curricula. For instance, Herbert (1952) advocated for the teaching of consecutive before simultaneous, as well as some particular exercises like same-language shadowing before proceeding on to paraphrase, first in the native language then the B language.

Ilg (1959) advised progression also in subject complexity, from easier to harder topics and registers. In contrast, few today would subscribe to Herbert's belief that simultaneous interpreting could be self-taught, although this tradition seems to have survived in numerous manuals for interpreting students. One institution, the ESIT in Paris, created a more thorough theoretical framework for instruction and promoted a constructivist strategy for skill development that was justified by theoretical arguments. With this one exception, however, theoretical inputs have remained minimal, with conference interpreting training in many top schools still appearing to rely on the intuition of senior instructors (Setton & Dawrant 2016b).

Lambert (1988, 1989, 1992) advocates a mixed training protocol in twelve steps, from listening and memory exercises through shadowing, dual-task training, paraphrasing, abstracting, closing, sight translation, 'sight interpreting', processing digits, proper names, technical words and acronyms, lagging exercises, anticipation and left and right-ear processing, before beginning consecutive and simultaneous (Setton & Dawrant 2016b).

De Groot (2000) makes the argument for part-task training for both components that can be automated, like word retrieval, and those that need more effort, like coordination or attention management. She also proposes progressing gradually towards simultaneous through shadowing.

The first volume with a full theory-based account of teaching conference interpreting came from Seleskovitch and Lederer in the Paris School. They regarded consecutive

interpreting as the mode that needed to be mastered first, after which simultaneous interpreting was mainly a question of training (Seleskovitch & Lederer 1989).

In his “manual”, Matyssek (1989) gives an introduction to the field of interpreting as well as its various modes, and lays out a methodical process for creating unique note-taking strategies, notably symbols. His principles of note-taking emphasize the importance of meaning and economy in any note-taking system. Although he created a vast number of symbols, Rozan, Herbert, and other forerunners shared his perspective on note-taking concepts. In this respect, his procedures for the development of personal note-taking emphasize the importance of reflection. His position is clear: the student should not adopt Matyssek’s system and symbols as a whole, but use this information to develop a personal system that meets the needs of the individual. He emphasizes the value of exposure to highly advanced systems of professional interpreters in order to fulfill this objective.

Another key example is Gile’s *Basic Concepts and Models for Interpreter and Translator Training* (1995), a guide that provides theoretical content structured in modules for use in both the interpreting and translation classrooms (Sawyer 2004: 23). This monograph is most relevant for drawing upon interdisciplinary research (cognitive psychology, psycholinguistics) to develop instructional material.

Déjean Le Féal (1998), for example, defines two large instructional approaches: language pair-dependent and language pair-independent pedagogies. The first group is based on Seleskovitch’s *théorie du sens*, while the second group advocates greater attention to language pair-specific strategies. Déjean Le Féal (1998) outlines a framework for most curricula, beginning with consecutive interpreting and sight translation in the first phase and then introducing simultaneous interpreting, which occurs before simultaneous interpreting with text. Courses in professional ethics make up the final stages of this curriculum. Despite this general framework, Déjean Le Féal mentions that introductory simultaneous interpreting exercises constitute an area in which instructors hold a wide array of different opinions, in particular with regard to shadowing. Déjean Le Féal even advocates leaving out preparatory exercises for simultaneous interpreting entirely and expanding on the techniques of consecutive interpreting instead, which she thinks should be taught before simultaneous interpreting (1997: 617).

Since the 1950s and 1960s, a select group of renowned interpreting schools have mostly succeeded in equipping conference interpreters for employment at the highest levels by using a “standard” apprenticeship-based training model. The International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) also supports this approach. Within this model, the teachers are ‘facilitators’

who set objectives and expectations. However, some of this model's features have been criticized on scientific and methodological grounds and need to be addressed in any project to update the training of conference interpreters (Setton & Dawrant 2016b: 59).

Even schools renowned for their holistic approaches require students to perform preliminary tasks, such as counting backwards while listening for recollection (also known as dual-task training), repeating words or sentences phonetically or semantically without changing the language, or reporting what the speaker is saying rather than translating (a process known as "reportage") (Setton & Dawrant 2016b: 60).

The progressive curriculum has been one of the pillars of the traditional training paradigm. Here students go from exercises in active listening and analysis, to consecutive interpreting with notes and sight translation. They then move on to simultaneous interpreting, learning each new skill first into the native (A) language and only then into the second (B) language. As intuitively adopted by early trainers, Setton & Dawrant (2016a: 24) believe this progressive strategy to be pedagogically extremely convincing.

Another traditional concern is the authenticity of tasks and materials. In order to keep things fun and stimulating, they apply the principle of "incremental realism", which refers to the use of exercises that contain something of the communicative goal, instead of doing artificial drills meant to address all components of the interpreting task. This idea has been often toyed with in the training debate. According to Setton & Dawrant, the essence of interpreting is to gradually introduce new difficulties in terms of the communicative features of the input (e.g., from natural to formal speech). In contrast to language learning, the input materials used here are chosen to stimulate and gradually develop a specific kind of cognitive processing rather than necessarily progressing in terms of "linguistic" complexity or topic matter. Some factors, such as language ability, specific subject-matter expertise, or the mechanics of taking notes, are exceptions to the general rule of gradual realism and should be given separate attention (Setton & Dawrant 2016a: 25).

Attempting to bring students into contact with all of the realities of professional interpreting, including the difficult circumstances that young graduates must deal with on the job market today - fast, dense, recited input, foreign accents, and presentations that combine speech, text, and slides - represents a second extension of the standard model (Setton & Dawrant 2016a: 25).

Another innovation when it comes to interpreter training methods that has been a standard in emerging markets for a long time now is the mainstreaming of 'bi-active' simultaneous interpreting, i.e., into the B as well as the A language. Because simultaneous

interpreting into a non-native language is more challenging cognitively and linguistically, Setton & Dawrant suggest two adjustments to the standard curriculum in this sense: extra class hours for into-B training, and significantly more language enhancement support than most leading schools traditionally provide. This refers to both dedicated language enhancement classes and in classroom feedback into the second (B) language (Setton & Dawrant 2016a).

The issue of directionality has been present in the world of conference interpreting since the beginnings, with the main view expressed most insistently by the Paris School being that interpreting should be done into the interpreter's native language (A). However, representatives of what was then the communist bloc claimed the opposite. Denissenko (1989), for example, believes that comprehension in one's native language is always significantly better and it is a prerequisite for the interpreting process. He also believes that the fact that the interpreter has fewer possible target language renditions when interpreting into the B language, facilitates a quicker decision-making process (Bartłomiejczyk 2015: 109). For Seleskovich (1968) on the other hand, the practice of interpreting into the non-native language should not be taught at all as she believes that interferences into the B language are unavoidable even if the interpreter is a very fluent speaker of the non-native language. She also argues against Danissenko's belief that comprehension is better in the A language, by saying that comprehension in the B language should occur spontaneously if the interpreter's knowledge is good enough (Seleskovich & Lederer 1989). However, due to market demands, "bi-active" simultaneous interpreting has become more and more required because several of the more recent EU official languages, like Romanian, are highly uncommon as interpreters' B or C languages. This has determined the Paris School to tolerate it as a necessary evil and teach it only after students have mastered interpreting into the A language (Bartłomiejczyk 2015: 109).

One last point that Setton & Dawrant address is the importance of reinforcing professionalism. The tendency to accept makeshift or unreasonable terms and conditions by young beginners in the field proves that students need a fuller, more detailed introduction to the proper working conditions, role norms and conventions, how to deal with clients, and the organization of the profession. Practice visits to organizations with work in 'dumb booths', as well as support and mentoring even after graduation could solve the problem (Setton & Dawrant 2016a).

In his contribution to *The Evolving Curriculum in Interpreter and Translator Education* (2019), Pöchhacker describes the process of arriving to the current curriculum at the University of Vienna, an institution that established its first interpreting program as early as 1943. Having a rather philological orientation, the program first served as an institutional framework for

testing language proficiency. It was only in 1946 that a three-and-a-half-year curriculum for translator and interpreter training went into effect. This structure remained in effect until the early 1970s (Pöchhacker 2019: 144).

Two significant new requirements were added to the curriculum in 1972: a second foreign language, and an academic graduation thesis. By the 1990s, some relevant issues emerged, such as the large dropout rate and the low number of students who would graduate in the assigned four (or five) years. These issues were then addressed and it was concluded that the main reasons for the above-mentioned problems were the lack of preparation for academic work within the Master's program and the shortage of supervisors at the time. Therefore, students had difficulties in completing a graduation thesis. The first professorial positions in translation studies were created in Austria in the late 1980s (Pöchhacker 2019: 144).

In the course of the 1990s, with Austria's accession in the European Union and the subsequent Bologna Process, the public university system was reorganized. The biggest change to curriculum development came with the transformation of Austria's universities, formerly units of public administration reporting to the Minister, into largely autonomous state-funded organizations. An interesting aspect that came with the 2003 curricula was the separation of studies into a three-year BA and four possible two-year MAs that offered the students the possibility of applying credits from one MA program to another, and thus obtaining additional MA degrees for less additional coursework. However, despite the students' and program administrators' satisfaction with the four different MA curricula, there was pressure from the University administrators to limit the degree of overlap between separate programs, meaning fewer course credits that could count toward more than one curriculum. This forced the Center for Translation Studies to reform its curricula once again (Pöchhacker 2019: 145).

In 2007, the undergraduate program's name was changed to Transcultural Communication, previously International Communication, and the four MA studies were reorganized into two MA programs that featured two specializations each. The two MAs were Translation and Interpreting, each with subsequent specializations: literary translation or technical translation for the former one and dialogue interpreting or conference interpreting for the latter (Pöchhacker 2019: 145).

Another restructuring took place after the first five-year cycle of implementation. The problems found at that time consisted in the lack of dialogue interpreting courses as well as the impossibility of choosing to have three C languages, as opposed to the standard A-B-C combination. The objectives of the reform were to enhance employability and offer greater flexibility in the course configuration. Subsequent design efforts focused on mandatory

modules across all specializations that were kept to this day. For the interpreting specializations, the flexibilization consisted of a wide range of language combinations (A-B-C, A-C-C-C or A-B-C-C for conference interpreting) (Pöchhacker 2019: 146).

While the long academic tradition of Babeş-Bolyai University can be traced back to 1581, the Faculty of Letters opened its first department focusing on translation and interpreting only in 1990. On the initiative of Mrs. Rodica Baconsky and with significant assistance from the SCIC and the European Parliament, the first MA in conference interpreting was established in 2002. For seven years, the program ran in a one-year format (MEIC 2022a).

The Master's in Conference Interpreting received accreditation from the Romanian Ministry of Education in 2007, and in October of the same year, it became the only program in the country to be approved into the EMCI consortium, where it joined the top interpreting programs from throughout Europe. Its structure also changed, becoming a two-year program according to the Bologna agreements. According to the EMCI, the content of the Master's program had to comprise the theory of interpreting, the practice of interpreting, consecutive interpreting, simultaneous interpreting, the EU and international organizations and additionally, optional courses (EMCI 2022).

Ever since becoming an EMCI member, the MA curriculum in Conference Interpreting is reviewed annually, without necessarily being changed unless requiring improvements. This is also why an official version of the curriculum is published every year. The design of the core curriculum is made in collaboration with the European Institutions (MEIC 2022a).

Although nowadays a general consensus regarding the constituent elements that need to be included in curriculum models exists, fundamental tensions are still present. As advised by AIIC, EMCI, and CIUTI, the majority of courses concentrating on professional practice include a theory component, and the roles of theory and practice must be integrated. Similarly, technological innovation and circumstances have led to a significant increase in online and hybrid instruction, which in turn are reshaping some curricula. In light of this, it makes sense that the curriculum currently in use at any given institution will continue to be shaped by that institution's educational philosophy, which is controlled by particular political, cultural, statutory, and market-specific constellations and traditions in its region of the world (Sawyer 2015: 99).

3. Curricular Issues

Distinguishing conference interpreting from other language-related tasks is one of the key goals of classifying it as a profession. This divide is represented in the pedagogy of interpreting, which, particularly in Europe, has dissociated itself from the study of teaching foreign languages (Arjona 1984: 3). The significance of this issue consists in the realization that, unlike language and literature programs, the pedagogy of interpreting views language competency as a foundation upon which language transfer competencies are built rather than as a purpose of the study (Snell-Hornby 1998: 33).

Arjona (1984) begins her discussion on curriculum with a model introduced by Velleman at the University of Geneva in 1941. Area studies, multidisciplinary studies, applied language arts and linguistic studies, practical courses, and deontology made up this study program's five components (Sawyer 2015: 97).

By highlighting the connections between its components and guiding its construction, usage, and evaluation, curriculum theory, as defined by Beauchamp, lends meaning to a school's curriculum (1975: 58). It is therefore important to pay attention to the relationships between curriculum components as they are relevant to the development, use and evaluation of the curriculum as a whole (Sawyer 2004: 39). Specifically for the field of translation, these components include, for example, skills-based components (such as translation and interpreting), knowledge-based components (domain expertise) and components referring to the knowledge of the profession, e.g., ethics, professional identity and business practices. These diverse components have various levels of explicitness in different curriculum models, this is why their appropriate sequencing would serve to enhance the quality of interpreter education (Sawyer 2004: 40).

The distinction between pedagogy and curriculum is hard to make because both represent interrelated phenomena. According to Walter Doyle, curriculum is designed to shape or direct teaching practice and “cannot be achieved except during acts of teaching” (1992: 486). In this sense, there are three levels of curricular interaction that can be identified: interaction on the program level, interaction in specific courses and interaction among individuals (students, instructors, administrators, alumni etc.). Ornstein & Hunkins claim that a person's or an organization's “philosophy, view of history, view of psychology and learning theory, and view of social issues” are reflected in the foundations of the curriculum (1998: 16). These

elements will be briefly discussed in the following in order to illustrate how they have been implicitly present in interpreter education and Interpreting Studies.

John Dewey (1929) set the foundations for the humanistic approach of curriculum. One of his key concepts is that experience-based pedagogy implies learning by doing through intelligent problem solving with an instructor or coach. Structuring the learning environment and processes according to this principle is essential for curriculum design, for it is meant to ensure effective learning outcomes. According to Dewey, the student and the curriculum are two ends to the same process, that is guided by the teacher. His method places the learner's interests first, and all of the student's growth areas are included in the teaching objectives. In other words, instruction does not emerge from stiff organized knowledge. This way of defining curriculum has been subsumed in the term “discovery learning” (Sawyer 2004: 44).

In more recent years, the Translation Studies literature has shown interest in the principles of the progressivist movement, emphasizing the *how* instead of the *what* when it comes to thinking (Ornstein & Hunkins 1998: 46). Dewey's work also encouraged the emergence of other educational philosophies such as constructivism. Two guiding ideas of constructivism, according to Duffy and Cunningham, are that “learning is an active process of construction rather than acquiring knowledge” and that “instruction is a process of supporting that construction rather than communicating knowledge” (1996: 171).

The historical development of educational programs and, more crucially, the shifts in mindsets regarding curriculum are explained by the fact that all human activities take place in relation to time and context (Ornstein & Hunkins 1998: 62). This kind of historical evolution is prominent, as philosophies of curriculum and instruction tend to rigidify in interpreter education, as in other fields (Sawyer 2004: 41). Ignoring the progress in knowledge, technology, the shifting value systems and the changes in political and economic life would lead to an outdated approach, detrimental to all parts involved. It is exactly this acknowledgement that led to the introduction of simultaneous interpreting in a course of study in the late 1940s and early 1950s in Vienna. The disparity in viewpoints between, for instance, the Universities of Vienna and Geneva became apparent when this specific method of interpretation gained popularity in the market (Kurz 1996). In Vienna, the instructors were open to the development of these courses. The university telephone system was used to launch simultaneous interpreting sessions in the late 1940s (Kurz 1996). In Geneva, teaching simultaneous interpreting was initially frowned upon, but in 1947, individual practice sessions were added to the curriculum (Sawyer 2004: 46). The historical perspective supports in

appreciating how educational action is surrounded by “various configurations of time-bound and context-specific factors” (Ornstein & Hunkins 1998: 96).

The third pillar for curriculum, psychology, complements philosophy by revealing the ways in which students are taught and learn. However, it is not to say that the relationship between knowledge and its application in the classroom is easy. The key challenges, according to Sternberg (1986), include areas of theory, student and teacher aptitude, and student and teacher motivation. He also considers merging theories of cognition and theories of instruction applicable at classroom unit level and individual level to be particularly challenging in curriculum implementation (Sternberg 1986: 275).

The fourth building block of the curriculum, sociology, emphasizes how the curriculum reflects society and the values that compose it. In interpreter education it is cultural studies, literature and history that shine a light on these values in the curriculum model. Another relevant factor refers to how a program stimulates industry practices, ethics and professional conduct, while providing a smooth transition into the workplace (Sawyer 2004: 49).

As a result, these values influence how educational systems are designed and should be taken into account while developing curricula. The way theoretical, practical and productive knowledge are organized in the curriculum is a great example of how educational values lead to different curricular frameworks. While some programs may strive for general knowledge and one specific field of specialization, others may emphasize the achievement of breadth and depth in all the fields concurrently (Sawyer 2004: 50).

3.1. The Official Curriculum

There are many alternative ways to define curriculum. According to the International Bureau of Education (IBE) of UNESCO, a student is supposed to move through a planned, ordered curriculum in the pursuit of a specific objective. A curriculum, in the words of Greeno, Collins, and Resnick, is “a set of educational goals and a sequence of learning activities” that are meant to foster “development toward those goals” (1996: 33). According to Ornstein and Hunkins, who reviewed these concepts, the curriculum can be described in five ways: as a plan, experience, system, field of study, or subject matter (1998: 10-11). The curriculum as a plan and the curriculum as experience are two of these key viewpoints that are the focus of the interview study that will be discussed later in this thesis. In the case of curriculum as a plan, the officially published documents reflect the plan of action that contains clearly stated learning

objectives for each program. By doing so, the curriculum is regarded as a process, as a sequence of components that creates a framework for an individual's learning. The second view, however, defines curriculum as encompassing all the learning experiences of the student. In this view the interaction between student and instructor in the professional community of interpreters is what determines the outcomes of the learning experience (Sawyer 2004: 42).

3.2. The Hidden Curriculum

While a written curriculum documents a plan of action, also known as a guide to curriculum implementation, it does not document the curriculum in its entirety. According to Ornstein & Hunkins, there are many positive and negative outcomes that can occur by merely taking into account the official curriculum. An overly prescriptive approach in the way education is offered would also be detrimental to the learning process. The value of the hidden curriculum, which is the part of the curriculum that students will undoubtedly acquire even though it is not written down, should therefore not be overlooked (Ornstein & Hunkins 1998: 12).

Future interpreters' values and worldviews are shaped by the hidden curriculum. If, for example, a program does not address the administrative parts of working as a freelancer on the market, such as the personal branding or the connections necessary to form a network and actively work as an interpreter, students may end up having a false image of the practice of the profession after graduation. This also applies for the practice of simultaneous interpreting in the non-native language. If it is not offered in the official curriculum, one may believe that it is not a legitimate practice. Thus, education in these areas becomes a part of the hidden curriculum. It is this curriculum that truly matters for the learner as it is individually experienced. The official curriculum is, in turn, what shapes the spirit of the institution (Sawyer 2004: 43).

The interview study conducted for the present thesis aims to take a closer look at those factors that are not codified in curriculum documents. It takes the knowledge of an insider to be able to evaluate the variables that are not apparent to an external observer who might only have the written curriculum as reference. It is of great importance to present information about the hidden curriculum since these variables have the power to significantly impact curriculum outcomes. Any methodological decisions run the danger of being ill-informed, improper, or detrimental without an understanding of how students are experiencing learning. Because of

this, the most fundamental meta-criteria for determining whether or not successful teaching is occurring are teachers' conscious and systematic attempts to enter students' minds and perceive learning from their perspective (Takeda 2010: 39).

3.3. Curriculum Models

One of many distinct approaches that have been made to curriculum and curriculum design is behaviorism. The goal with this approach was to make the curriculum more specific and to reduce teaching and learning to activities that could be measured (Sawyer 2004: 61). This method, which is based on technical and scientific principles, typically has objectives that are laid out in a plan. The content of the curriculum is then sequenced in order to evaluate the learning outcomes in relation to the goals and objectives. However, throughout time, behavioral techniques became more comprehensive and began to see the learner as a socially adaptive human with cognitive functions. This is how the computational view of the mind and the cognitive psychology of expertise made it into the field of Interpreting Studies as curriculum approaches derived from behaviorism (Sawyer 2004: 61).

Gerver, Massaro, and Moser were the first to use the computational view of the mind and information processing in interpretation studies in the late 1970s. This approach is mostly focused on the cognitive structures built up by the learners themselves, which suggests that in this process, powerful cognitive structures for organizing and applying knowledge are developed by students. Information processing therefore is relevant to learning and instruction because it is based on sharpening the focus on the process of thinking, as well as the relationship between mental processes and performances (Sawyer 2004: 62). One of the more well-known information processing models that was developed specifically for pedagogical purposes is Gile's Efforts Model (1995).

There are typically two prerequisites for curriculum planning: a prepared setting for instruction and a planned sequence of educational events (Schrag 1992: 276). In order to avoid overlapping in pedagogical content, curriculum designers came up with two basic models for translator and interpreter education: open and closed curricula. The first model affords the learner greater choice in determining the content of the curriculum, while the second one is strictly sequenced. Open systems can, however, result in lengthier study hours due to a looser sequencing of activities, which can provide a wider difference between the official and hidden curricula and make them less cost-effective (Sawyer 2004: 62). Five fundamental curricular

models for translator and interpretation education are covered by Arjona (1984), and they may be used to explain the great majority of interpreting and translating courses.

The linear model is based on the idea that practical experience in translation is useful for building a solid foundation in terminology and basic linguistic tools. This model therefore sequences the program in a way that assures that the instruction in translation proceeds interpreting. The modified linear model implies that the entry to either the interpreting or translation degree is possible only after the completion of a core translation curriculum. All students with a curriculum that follows the Y-or forked-track model complete a core curriculum before selecting their area of expertise in either translation or interpreting. The modified Y-track model offers students the possibility to access multidisciplinary specializations, such as business or political science, instead of only translation or interpreting after a core curriculum. Last but not least, the parallel track model is based on entry examinations, professional credentials and prior academic experience. This model allows students to specialize in either translation or interpreting at any level, offering them a range of curriculum alternatives. Usually, students experience the model of the institution they are attending, although transfers from one program to another or exchanges with other educational institutions make it possible for students to experience additional curriculum models Arjona (1984: 9).

Renfer (1992) compared several curriculum models, focusing on the linear and Y-track models in particular. His conclusion, based on experience with both models, was that the sequential model is superior. While this outcome could be based on his reservations about training conference interpreters for undergraduate studies, it also shows how various factors like the level in the educational system, the background of the students and the translation experience can impact curriculum design and implementation.

During the 1990's, the curriculum reform in Germany and Austria introduced curriculum modules as a way to bring greater flexibility in curriculum implementation (Sawyer 2004: 88). According to Hönig (1995), an open curriculum should start with a core module where students learn conversational skills in their native language and at least one other language. This module must be completed in the initial semesters of an eight-semester course of study and it is then followed by complementary subject areas aimed at building cultural, research and specialized competencies. In his view, students must pass a set of intermediate examinations before choosing a specialization. Hönig's modular course of studies allows students to assemble their program of instruction based on their own skills and abilities, interests, previous professional qualifications, and personal goals. The course of study requires building communicative competencies during the initial semesters and it is not subject to strict

curriculum sequencing. It therefore falls under the umbrella of Y-forked models according to Arjona (Sawyer 2004: 88).

The question remains: How can curriculum instructions be made more effective in a way that higher skills can be acquired by a larger group of students in the same amount of time or less, without adding more specificity to the curriculum documents?

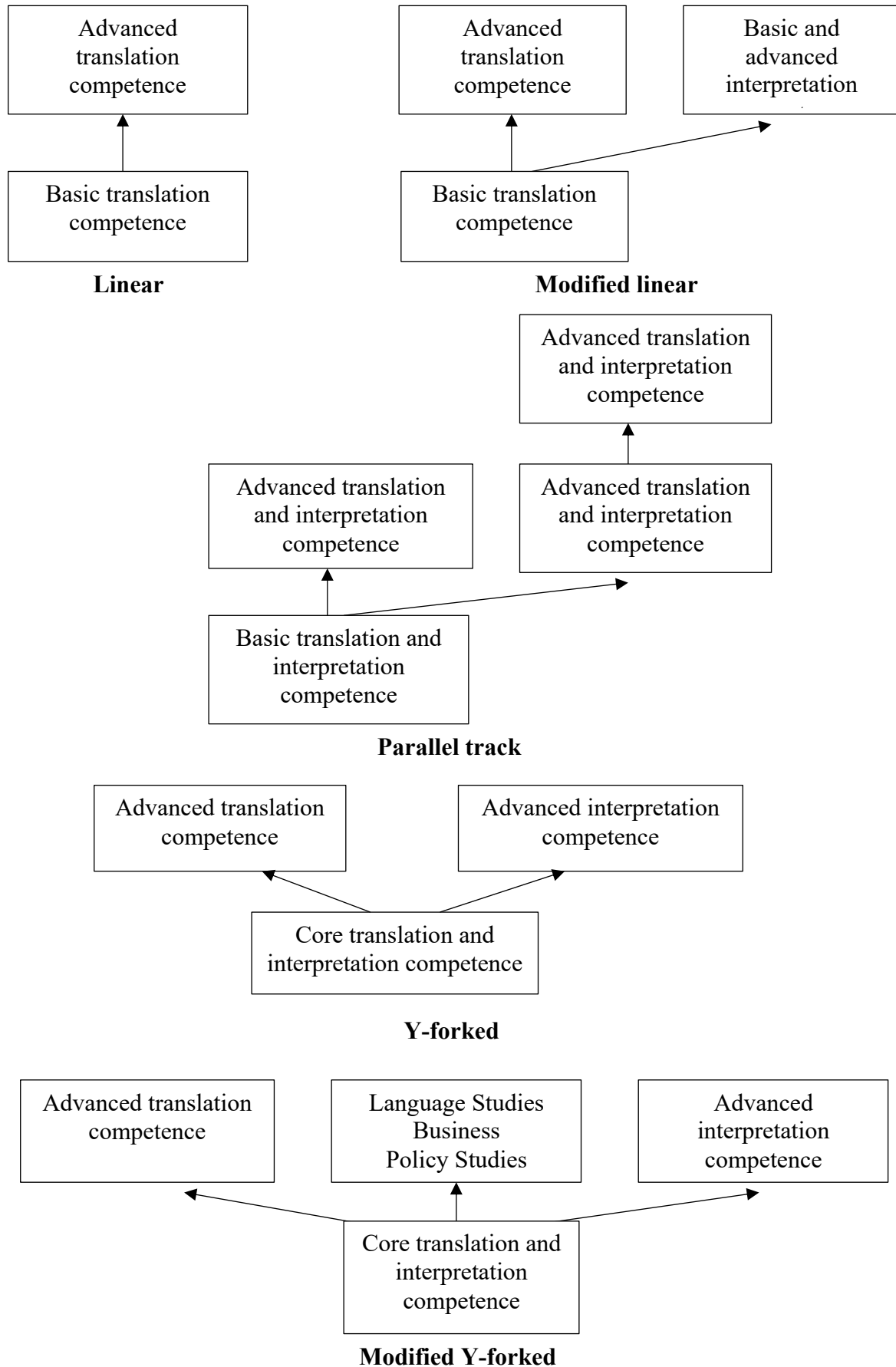


Fig.1. Curriculum models Arjona (Sawyer 2004 :87)

4. Methodology

4.1. Document Analysis

Access to the official curriculum documents was offered on the official websites of both institutions. When accessing the information in English was not possible, Romanian and German sources were used instead. The information available online was diverse, yet not always conclusive. While the University of Vienna is very transparent in giving public access to a well-documented online curriculum, it was harder to find a clear curricular structure and course description for the Master's program at Babeş-Bolyai University. In order to confirm the information found online and to ask for clarifications, a member of the teaching staff and former coordinator of the program was contacted. The purpose of the document analysis was to present the contents of the official curriculum in order to create a basis from which the hidden curriculum could emerge. It represents the expectations and requirements set by each program, as described by the program administrations themselves.

The varied work languages, specialties, and national educational frameworks presented some difficulties when examining the curriculum materials. For example, the structure of the Master's curricula in Romania does not take into account the possibility of exceeding four semesters for the completion of the graduate degree. The flexibility of dividing courses and modules according to preference and available time may be regarded as one of the reasons why very few students in Austria graduate in the designated four semesters, whereas in Romania it is not at all common for students to still be enrolled in Master's programs after two years. Another difference consists of the fact that despite having offered German as a working language in the past, Babeş-Bolyai University does not currently dispose of the necessary teaching staff to offer German as part of their Master's program. The University of Vienna is currently the only University outside Romania that offers students the possibility to study conference interpreting combining Romanian and German.

Each program has different requirements and different expectations, with hands-on language-specific interpreting classes that are either core courses, optional or not even part of the curriculum, as in the case of retour-interpreting in Cluj-Napoca. With these aspects in mind, the approach towards document analysis was systematic.

4.2. Interviews

The methodological approach used for collecting data for this study was qualitative content analysis. The in-depth analysis allowed by qualitative interviews was the main reason for choosing this research tool over quantitative interviews. Another more pragmatic reason was the low number of participants that fit the criteria to participate in the study, making qualitative interviews more appropriate for the purpose of this research.

According to Reinders (2005), there are three basic principles for qualitative research: openness, processualism, and communication. The first one, openness, refers to the fact that the interview should not aim to evaluate any preset hypothesis, but rather focus on analyzing subjective experiences, actions, attitudes and their meaning to the individual. Reinders claims that the goal is to access the interviewee's innermost thoughts and feelings. The second principle refers to seeing the interview as a process, meaning that the structure of the interview should go from past to present for the evolution to be rendered as the process that it is. It is also important to look at the relationship between the interviewee and other subjects that might have influenced the learning process.

The third principle of qualitative research according to Reinders (2005) is communication. In the case of this study, a certain reciprocity between interviewer and interviewee was established by the fact that the interviewer had the same socio-cultural background as the interviewees by being a Romanian student pursuing a master's degree in conference interpreting. All interviews followed the rules of casual conversation.

According to Mayring (2015: 12), there are various ways to define content analysis. However, there is no official consensus, with most definitions being shaped by the interests of the author. Nonetheless, Mayring describes six specific characteristics for content analysis as a social science method. Firstly, while content analysis usually refers to word interpretation, it can also refer to symbols like verbal, musical, pictorial or gestural objects that make up the communication itself. Secondly, content analysis works with texts, images, notes and symbolic material. Thirdly, content analysts have always been particularly resistant to free interpretation, aiming to proceed systematically and therefore setting this method apart from most hermeneutic procedures. The systematic approach, however, also shows itself in the fact that a good content analysis proceeds in a guided manner. The results are then interpreted from the theoretical background, and the individual analysis steps are also guided by theoretical considerations. Finally, content analysis, unlike text analysis, does not analyze its material

exclusively for itself, but as a part of the communication process. In summary, content analysis aims to analyze fixed communication, to proceed systematically based on rules and to pursue the goal of drawing conclusions about certain aspects of communication. While this is a qualitative research method, it still relies on the systematic approach present in quantitative methods in order not to be misinterpreted as arbitrary. In order to be qualitative, the content analysis must understand its material as part of a communication chain, and not in isolation. Certain concepts of quantitative content analysis, such as the creation of systems of categories as the center of the analysis, can be retained in qualitative content analysis. Qualitative content analysis must also be able to be evaluated against standards of excellence, just like any scientific approach (Mayring 2015: 13).

4.2.1. Sampling

Six semi-structured qualitative interviews with students aged 24 to 27 who had either completed or been enrolled in one of the two Master's programs in Austria or Romania between October 1, 2016, and September 30, 2022, served as the basis for the data collection. Interviewees number one (I-1), three (I-3) and four (I-4) had studied or were still studying in Cluj-Napoca while interviewees number two (I-2), five (I-5) and six (I-6) had studied or were still studying in Vienna. The initial sampling method was a convenience sample (Misoch 2015: 302), based on personal connections with students at both universities. However, in order to gain access to a more diverse pool of students, I then applied the snowball sampling method, which allowed me to interact with students in a more objective manner, while still having their trust to confide in me as an interviewer. Considering the low number of students with Romanian-A studying conference interpreting in Vienna, the sample was close to the full population. The Study Service Center was only able to confirm that there were five students specializing in conference interpreting with Romanian-A enrolled at the time due to confidentiality and data protection regulations. This number included myself, but without having access to any names or years of enrollment, only three of the four students could be identified and interviewed. Therefore, a full census was not possible. Each of the interviewees had either graduated with a diploma or had gone through the curricular contents of at least four semesters. Participation in the interviews was voluntary.

4.2.2. Participants

Out of the six participants, five were feminine presenting and one was masculine presenting. This confirms the general tendency regarding gender in the field of conference interpreting.

Interviewee number one (I-1) was a 24-year-old male who had studied in Cluj-Napoca between 2019 and 2021 and had graduated from MEIC with the language combination Romanian-English-French, also passing the *retour* exam into English. For his Bachelor's he studied and graduated from LMA in Cluj-Napoca. The interview took place on April 4, 2022, with the interviewee residing in Cluj-Napoca at the time of the interview. The interview lasted 111:08 minutes and had to be broken into three separate recordings because of technical difficulties with the platform. It followed the rules of casual conversation and had certain English interferences as it can be seen in the appendix. The interviewee had been sampled through the snowball sampling method and was not a direct contact of mine at the time.

Interviewee number two (I-2) was a 25-year-old female who had been enrolled in the Master's program in Vienna since 2020. Her language combination was Romanian-German-English and she had gone through most curricular contents of the program, but had not yet attempted to take any of the final exams. She had also previously taken some of the practical courses of the Master's program in Vienna during her Erasmus Semester, having graduated from LMA in Cluj-Napoca for her Bachelor's. She resided in Vienna at the time of the interview. The interview took place on April 9, 2022 online and lasted 84:08 minutes. It was required to repeat several questions and responses due to the occasionally obtrusive sound in order to verify that the message was understood. This interview also followed the rules of casual conversation and contained certain English and German interferences because of the familiarity between interviewer and interviewee. I had taken certain courses with this interviewee during my time at ZTW Vienna and was familiar with certain concepts she was expressing in German. The sampling method for this interviewee was therefore convenience sample (Misoch 2015: 302).

Interviewee number three (I-3) was a 25-year-old female who had studied at MEIC Cluj-Napoca for her Master's between 2018 and 2020 and had graduated with the language combination Romanian-English-French. She, however, did not pass her *retour* exam into English. For her Bachelor's, she had studied at LMA in Cluj-Napoca. The interview took place on April 10, 2022 and lasted 80:39 minutes. At the time of the recording, the interviewee

resided in Brussels where she worked as a full-time interpreter for a European Syndicate. The interview followed the rules of casual conversation and contained certain English and French interferences. In her case, the sampling method was also convenience sample, the two of us having graduated from LMA Cluj in the same generation.

Interviewee number four (I-4) was a 25-year-old female who had been enrolled in the Master's program in Cluj-Napoca since 2019. She had completed all program requirements at the time of the interview, but she had failed her final exam and was attending the following exam session in June 2022. Her language combination for the Master's program was Romanian-English-French, although she had graduated from the Bachelor's program in Cluj-Napoca with the language combination Romanian-Italian-French. The interview took place on April 10, and lasted for 85:36 minutes. It had to be broken into three separate recordings because of technical difficulties with the platform. At the time of the recording, the interviewee resided in Cluj-Napoca. The interview followed the rules of casual conversation and contained some English interferences. Interviewee I-1 and I-4 studied in the same generation, and the sampling technique used in this instance was the snowball sample.

Interviewee number five (I-5) was a 25-year-old female who had been studying at ZTW in Vienna since 2019. At the time of the interview, she had completed all the curricular contents of the program, including the six final exams and was working on her Master's thesis. Her language combination was Romanian-German-French. She also obtained her bachelor's degree from LMA Cluj-Napoca. The interview took place on April 13, 2022, over Zoom, and lasted 71:55 minutes. At the time of the interview, the interviewee resided in Vienna, Austria. This interview too followed the rules of casual conversation and contained certain interferences in English and French. The sometimes-unstable internet connection made the repetition of certain questions and answers necessary in order to ensure clarity of the communication. The sampling method for this interviewee was convenience sample, as she was my only peer in the same generation studying conference interpreting with Romanian A.

Interviewee number six (I-6) was a 27-year-old female who had been studying at ZTW Vienna since 2016. She was the only participant whose bachelor's degree was completed in Vienna and the only one whose master's enrolment spanned over more than 10 semesters. She had completed all courses and four of the final exams, but did not yet write her Master's thesis and was at her fifth attempt of passing the final exams into English. Her language combination was Romanian-German-English. The interview took place on April 27, 2022, with the interviewee residing in Sibiu, Romania at the time of the interview. It lasted for 54:57 minutes and had to be broken down into two recordings because of personal reasons on the

interviewee's side. Additionally, the background sounds and sluggish internet connection required repeating some questions and responses in order to verify that the message was understood. The sampling method for this interviewee was snowball sampling. However, this interviewee was the hardest to find. Interviewee I-2 shared some classes with interviewee I-6 during her Erasmus semester, and I was able to locate her and do an interview with her for the purpose of this report since one of the instructors sent an email to all former students.

4.2.3. Interview Guide

The interview guide was developed on four levels, as suggested by Misoch (2015). The interviewees were informed of the confidentiality of their personal information during the first phase, which was an instructive phase in which I explained the purpose of the interview and my research to them. The second phase, considered the warm-up phase, consisted of an open question meant to familiarize the interviewee with the subject and notice their attitude towards it. I chose to ask when and how they first got interested in pursuing a career in interpreting because it was a question general enough to introduce them to the subject, but at the same time, personal enough to take them back in their own past to reminisce on their university experience. According to Kvale, this phase is decisive because it allows the interviewees to “have a grasp of the interviewer before they allow themselves to talk freely and expose their experiences and feelings to a stranger” (2012: 55). The third phase was the main interview, structured in five thematic areas: personal biography, university experience, personal views, timeline and prospects. While some of the questions were inductive, the majority of them relied on prior understanding of the official curricula. The reason I chose to structure the interview guide like this was because it made most sense chronologically, as well from an informative standpoint that helped me gather as much information about the hidden curriculum as possible. In the personal biography section, questions about the language acquisition of their working languages, the motivation for choosing one of the two universities, their prior experience in the field of interpreting and the financial aid or resources needed to enroll in each program helped me understand why the interviewees pursued a degree in the field of conference interpreting. Moving on to their university experience, each interviewee was given the opportunity to describe what their Master's program consisted of, starting with the admission procedure to how much freedom they had in choosing their language combination and organizing their courses, the learning of interpreting techniques, the size of the working groups and how this

influenced the amount of practice they had. Some traditional aspects of training were questioned, such as teaching of simultaneous and consecutive interpreting at the same time or in separate semesters, note-taking practices, feedback, assessment, professional practice and practice, final exams and requirements for graduation. The interviewees were prompted by these questions to consider how these procedures affected their development in order to expose some of the curriculum's hidden components. When asked about their personal views, the interviewees were given the opportunity to express their frustration as well as their satisfaction with how they learned to become conference interpreters. They were asked how they felt about tackling the relevant aspects of professional interpreting during their studies, about their language improvement, about the applicability of the courses and about their biggest achievements and challenges during that time. They were also asked what they thought about the current market for Romanian interpreters and its future. The timeline section of the interview guide was meant to compare the experiences of the interviewees who took most of their courses during the Covid-19 pandemic and those who studied on site. They were asked about prior IT knowledge, the platforms they used to interpret and the advantages and disadvantages of online vs. on site learning for each of them. Additionally, they were questioned in this section about the length of their studies and the reason they were unable to finish the program in the allotted four semesters. The second to last phase addressed the future prospects for each interviewee. In this section, they were questioned about the assistance the university provided in helping them find a job or internship during or after their studies, about the accreditation test for the European Institutions, and about the likelihood that they would work in a field unrelated to the one they studied for.

The last part was the closing phase in which the interviewees could reflect on the questions that were asked and they were given the chance to add any relevant aspects of their university education that were not discussed during the interview.

4.2.4. Procedure

The interviews took place in April 2022, exclusively online, using Zoom. They lasted for a total of 487 minutes, averaging 82 minutes per interview. With all interviewees being native Romanian speakers, the interviews took place in Romanian and the transcripts were then translated according to the categories that resulted from the coding process. The reason for choosing an online-interviewing method was that, at the time, each of the six interviewees

resided in Romania, Austria or Belgium. Additionally, due to recent technical advancements, all interviewees were acquainted with the platform and its features. This however did not guarantee an effortless process. In two of the six interviews Zoom unexpectedly crashed and although the recordings were saved, the meetings had to be restarted and recorded in three separate parts.

Throughout the interviews, the subjects were encouraged to report on their own experiences in order to record the similarities and the differences between the two programs. Furthermore, it was analyzed whether these experiences influenced their generalized expectation of their intended career. This resulted in two main questions that were then applied in the process of content analysis: What are the main experiences of Romanian conference interpreting students pursuing different master's programs and do these experiences shape their view on their future career?

4.2.5. Transcription

The transcription of each interview was selective, meaning that not every paraverbal sign was transcribed unless considered of potential relevance in the final interpretation of the data. This decision was made out of pragmatism but also because of the consensus that verbatim transcriptions are context-dependent (Halcomb & Davidson 2006: 40). For easier identification in the data interpretation phase, the lines of each transcription were numbered and the relevant information for each interview was included in the transcript header.

4.2.6. Data Analysis

Mayring (2015: 67) describes three techniques for data interpretation within content analysis: summarizing, explaining and structuring. I choose to structure the text by filtering out certain aspects of the material based on previously defined criteria and to explain individual parts of the texts in question. However, since this may sound like a very generalized method that needs further differentiation, I applied what Mayring (2015: 97) calls content structuring or deductive application of categories. The aim of this content-analytical technique is to filter out a specific structure from the material. The content was given this structure in the form of a categorization scheme. All text components that were addressed by the categories were then

systematically extracted from the material and explained in their context. In more general terms, the structuring process is based on a couple of more important points: the basic structuring dimensions must be determined and must be derived from the research question. These structuring dimensions are then usually further differentiated and, in the end, they are compiled into a system of categories (and subcategories), based on the material at hand and derived from the research questions (see Fig. 2).

1. Personal Motivation
2. Language Classification
3. Inconsistency
4. Flexibility
4.1. Curricular Conditions
4.2. Financial Conditions
5. Practice
5.1. Language Combination
5.2. Group Size
5.3. Interpreting Progression
5.4. Note-taking
5.5. Training Speeches
5.6. Professional Practice
6. Completion Difficulty

Fig. 2. Content Structuring - System of Categories

Therefore, the six above-mentioned categories represent the result of multiple trial-rounds through each interview and the selection of the most relevant aspects regarding students' experiences that were addressed in each interview. As recommended by Mayring (2015: 98), I started by determining the units of analysis through the six interviews I conducted. The structural dimensions were next determined by the questions in the interview guide. The characteristics of the answers to the interview guide's questions were then used to create a system of categories. After this, anchor examples (Mayring 2015: 98) were chosen to formulate definitions and coding rules for each category. In the case of *Flexibility* for example, the definition was *the ability to choose how to organize courses and change specializations*. After going through the material once, I could reference several quotes based on the above-mentioned definition. After a second reading, I extracted the passages that corresponded to the

category and definition. I also repeatedly reviewed the category system and definitions. The final step was the processing of the results. Based on the similarities between answers, I chose to explain these outcomes according to the previously described curriculum for each program. This way, I was able to show the direct correlation between the official curriculum and the hidden curriculum. The outcomes will be thoroughly discussed in the final chapters of this paper as they represent the core findings of my research.

5. Content Analysis of Curriculum Documents

This chapter presents an overview of the written contents of the Master's curricula at Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj and the University of Vienna. These contents are to then be placed in the context of current traditions and approaches set by associations such as the International Organization of Conference Interpreters (AIIC), the International Standing Conference of University Institutes of Translators and Interpreters (CIUTI) and the European Master's in Conference Interpreting (EMCI), as described in previous chapters. Relevant aspects of each program such as each program's duration, the offered languages, the admission requirements, the classification of courses, the curriculum structure and the steps towards graduation will be thoroughly discussed in this chapter. A brief history of each institution will also be presented.

Both the University of Vienna and Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca provide online versions of the curricula on their websites. Having public access to this information does not only help set clear expectations for potential students but it also ensures transparency for both institutions. Ambiguity regarding some information represented a problem for the understanding of certain aspects. This and other topics will be covered in the section that follows.

5.1. MA in Translation and Interpreting Vienna

At the time of writing, the Center for Translation Studies in Vienna concentrates its research and teaching activities on the disciplines of translations studies, interpreting studies, terminology studies and transcultural communication.

The current curriculum, implemented in October 2015, is the one that will be described in the following and that represents the basis of the analysis to come.

The Center for Translation Studies currently offers a Bachelor of Arts in Transcultural Communication and two MAs in Translation and Interpreting in 14 languages. The four MA specializations are Specialized Translation and Language Industry (FS), Translation in Literature - Media - Art (LMK), Dialogue Interpreting (DD) and Conference Interpreting (KD). While the first two focus on written translation, the latter focus on interpreting. This final

specialization concentrates on key ideas in language technologies, production and application processes, and language resources.

The fairly large offer of specializations at the Center for Translation Studies, encompassed under the name Translation Master of Arts, is meant to qualify students to work as translators or communication specialists as well as to work in the academic field. Companies, public and private institutions, national and international organizations, the media, cultural institutions, publishing houses, and translation firms are just a few of the places where these graduates can find work (ZTW Curriculum 2015).

In Vienna, students who are citizens of the European Union, the European Economic Area or Switzerland pay 20,70 euros per semester for the first four semesters, a time frame that represents the minimum study period. Two tolerance semesters are added to this time frame. After the sixth semester, students have to pay a tuition fee of 363,36 Euro in addition to the ÖH² fee, which brings them to a total of 384,06 Euro (ÖH Contribution 2022).

5.1.1. Duration

According to the Bologna system implemented at the University of Vienna in the 1990s, the workload for the MA in Translation and Interpreting amounts to 120 ECTS³ credits. This corresponds to an intended duration of four semesters. The semesters are separated into summer and winter semesters, with the summer semester usually starting on October 1 and ending on the last day of February. The summer semester usually starts on March 1 and ends on the last day of September. These credits are then split into three modules: 24 ECTS credits for the compulsory module, 70 ECTS credits for the alternative compulsory module, 4 ECTS credits for the master colloquium, 21 ECTS credits for the master thesis, and 1 ECTS for the defense of the thesis. One ECTS credit represents the workload of around 25 hours. Once these credits are obtained and the modules are completed, the Master's degree is granted. However, being based on the Y-forked model, which allows students to pick the number of courses they want to complete according to personal preference and available time, the general tendency is to exceed the four semesters of study. This structural aspect of curriculum collides with other

² Membership in the Austrian National Union of Students, a compulsory fee for all degree program and non-degree program students.

³ European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System

cultural aspects that lead to considerable fluctuation in the time needed by each student to graduate. It is therefore hard to determine the exact duration of the program under normal circumstances (ZTW Curriculum 2015).

5.1.2. Languages

The Conference Interpreting specialization of the MA in Translation and Interpreting offers students the possibility to choose between eleven languages: Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, English, French, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Czech, Hungarian in combination with German as either the A or B language. At the same time, the working language combinations can be categorized as A-B-C and A-B-Cx-Cy where German is either the A or the B language, or A-B-Cx-Cy-Cz, where German must be the A language. The designations A, B and C language are based on the definition of working languages of the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) and do not refer to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. They do not refer to the type of language acquisition or the personal language biography of each student and are therefore not to be equated with “mother tongue, educational language or foreign language” (AIIC 2022a). This means that students are free to choose their language combination based on personal preference and proficiency, with the only prerequisite being that German needs to be used in any combination as an A or B language.

5.1.3. Admission

Unlike most interpreting schools, the Center for Translation Studies in Vienna does not require an admission test for the Master’s in Conference Interpreting. A Bachelor's degree in a subject related to translation must be completed in order to be admitted to the program. As a result, graduates of the University of Vienna, Graz, or Innsbruck who earned a bachelor's degree in transcultural communication are eligible to enroll instantly in the master's program offered by the Center for Translation Studies. For students who obtained their Bachelor’s degree in a different country than Austria, an equivalent degree at a recognized foreign post-secondary educational institution is accepted. Upon admission, graduates of BA programs other than translation must present at least 180 ECTS credits and indicate their proficiency in

two languages, one of which must be German. The way students can do this is either through proof of 36 ECTS credits from language-specific courses within the framework of a completed degree program or a degree from a recognized educational institution where the chosen language is the language of instruction. Certificates proving proficiency at the C2 level according to the European Framework of Reference for Languages are accepted after consultation with the head of the study program (ZTW Curriculum 2015).

The majority of the time, even when curricular content equivalence is attained, specific courses must still be taken in order to obtain full equivalence. These additional courses can amount to a maximum of 30 ECTS credits that need to be completed in the course of the Master's degree program. The head of the study program decides the number of additional courses based on the description of the courses graduated in the local curriculum. It is advised to finish these courses as soon as possible in the program.

Upon admission to the program, students may choose any of the above-mentioned specializations which can be studied with two languages. In the course of study, if proof of proficiency is submitted to the head of the study program, more languages may be chosen as working languages (ZTW Curriculum 2015).

According to the curriculum, provided that the specialization has not yet been chosen, the student has the option to add further working languages to their combination. The specialization can usually be declared after the first semester of study. It is important to note that once the specialization has been declared, it can no longer be changed. This means that once the language combination has been declared, the student must graduate from all courses and examinations within the chosen specialization.

5.1.4. Curriculum Structure

The MA in Translation and Interpreting consists of three main module groups as follows:

Mandatory Module Group – Translation	24 ECTS
Alternative Mandatory Module Group – Individual Specialization, Individual Work and Work Experience	70 ECTS
Final Module Group – Master's Colloquium, Master Thesis and Thesis Defense	26 ECTS

Fig. 3. Overview of Modular Curriculum Structure (ZTW 2015)

The first Mandatory Module Group consists of module TR-01 Translation in History and Present Times and module TR-02 Scientific Developments in Translation, each of them amounting to 12 ECTS.

The second Mandatory Module Group consists of modules that are specific to the chosen specialization. In the case of conference interpreting, these modules are: TR-KD-03 Consecutive Interpreting, TR-KD-04 Simultaneous Interpreting, TR-KD-05 Conference Interpreting I, TR-KD-06 Conference Interpreting II, TR-KD-07 Work Experience: Conference Interpreting. These amount to 10 ECTS each. The module group is completed with the final module TR-KD-08a Individual Work or KD-08b Additional Module: Fourth Language. For this eighth module students must obtain 20 ECTS.

The third and final module group differs from the other two in that it includes a single seminar called a master's colloquium, which is worth 4 ECTS, individual research, writing, and submission of a master's thesis, worth 21 ECTS, and the thesis defense, at 1 ECTS (ZTW Curriculum 2015).

All students enrolled in the MA Translation must complete the Mandatory Module Group that consists of the modules Translation in History and Present Times (TR-01) and Scientific Developments in Translation (TR-02). These modules can be completed in any order and they represent a prerequisite for entering any other module group. TR-01 consists of one Lecture – VO Translation and Transfer (4 ECTS) and two practical courses – UE Basic competence in the A language (4 ECTS) and UE Basic competence in the B language (4 ECTS). Upon successful completion, students should have an overview of the development of the profession in time and they should also develop basic translational competencies (translation and interpreting) in the chosen language combinations. TR-02 consists of three courses, only two of which need to be completed, based on the chosen specialization or personal preference – VO Theoretical and Applied Translation: Written Translation (4 ECTS) or VO Theoretical and Applied Translation: Interpreting (4 ECTS), VO Research Methodology (2 ECTS) and a seminar SE Theories and Methods (6 ECTS).

For the specialization in conference interpreting, the modules TR-KD-03 to TR-KD-08a or b must be completed. These modules can only be started after the completion of TR-01. TR-KD-03 consists of three practical courses UE Consecutive Interpreting I (4 ECTS), UE Consecutive Interpreting I - for the second language combination (4 ECTS) and UE Notetaking Technique (2 ECTS). Upon successful completion, students should be familiar with the basic technique of consecutive interpreting and various note-taking techniques. TR-KD-04 consists of three practical courses meant to familiarize students with the basic techniques of

simultaneous interpreting, including whispered interpreting (chuchotage) and sight translation. In addition, students will be taught how to train their own vocal tone and appreciate a differentiated and physically correct voice. These courses are UE Simultaneous Interpreting I (4 ECTS), UE Simultaneous Interpreting I – for the second language combination (4 ECTS) and UE Speaking Technique: Voice Training and Rhetoric (2 ECTS). The fifth alternative module group consists of two practical courses and a combined lecture with practice: UE Simultaneous Interpreting II (4 ECTS), UE Consecutive Interpreting II (4 ECTS) and VU Terminology Work (2 ECTS). Students who successfully complete the course should have a fundamental understanding of what conference interpreting entails, including the creation and use of subject-specific vocabulary. TR-KD-06 consists of two practical courses UE Conference Interpreting I and II (4 ECTS each) as well as subject-specific in-depth research (2 ECTS) in preparation for the oral exams. Enrollment in the final exams is only possible after the completion of this module. The seventh module TR-KD-07, consists of a practical course and a lecture that bring the technical and practical aspects of interpreting to attention. The lecture VO Conference Terminology and International Organizations (2 ECTS) and practical course UE Conference Simulation (8 ECTS) are meant to give students a comprehensive insight into relevant basic terminology. At the same time, this module counts as the professional practice for the Master's program in conference interpreting. Because the opportunities to interpret professionally as a student in real-life conferences are rare, this solution was found to enable this kind of practice. Last but not least, in the eighth module, TR-KD-08, Individual Work, students choose courses that are related to their specialization or represent areas of interest for them. The latter need to be approved by the program administration. They can be offered by the University of Vienna, as well as by other local universities, provided that they complement the Master's program in a meaningful way. The full course catalog is available online and it consists of over twenty practical courses meant to consolidate the student's knowledge in the field of translation. Students who complete the specialization in conference interpreting in the language combination A-Cx-Cy-Cz or A-B-Cx-Cy can expand their language profile with the "fourth language" module. In this case, attending seven practical courses and passing them is necessary for the completion of the module. These courses are UE Basic Competence Translation (4 ECTS), UE Consecutive Interpreting I (4 ECTS) and II (4 ECTS), UE Simultaneous Interpreting I (4 ECTS) and II (4 ECTS) and Conference Interpreting I (4 ECTS) and II (4 ECTS) (ZTW Curriculum 2015).

The Center for Translation Studies offers a recommended path that is meant to enable students to graduate in the assigned four semesters. According to this recommended path,

students should complete six courses in the first semester: TR-01 VO Translation and Transfer, TR-01 UE Basic Competence Translation A, TR-01 UE Basic Competence Translation B, TR-02 VO Research Methods, TR-02 VO Theoretical and Applied Translation: Interpreting and TR-02 SE Theories and Methods. This workload would amount to 24 ECTS. In the second semester, the courses TR-KD-03 UE Notetaking Technique, TR-KD-03 UE Consecutive Interpreting I: A/B, TR-KD-04 UE Simultaneous Interpreting I: A/B, TR-KD-03 UE Consecutive Interpreting I: C, TR-KD-04 UE Simultaneous Interpreting I: C, TR-KD-04 UE Speech Technique: Voice and Rhetoric, TR-KD-05 VU Terminology work and courses from the Mandatory Module TR-KD-08a should be completed, with a total workload of 32 ECTS. The third semester has the highest workload, 38 ECTS, with the following recommended courses: TR-KD-05 UE Consecutive Interpreting II: A/B or C, TR-KD-05 UE Simultaneous Interpreting II: A/B or C, TR-KD-07 VO Conference Terminology and International Organizations, TR-KD-07 UE Conference Simulation, TR-KD-06 UE Conference Interpreting I, TR-KD-06 UE Conference Interpreting II, TR-KD-06 Module Exam Conference Interpreting and courses from the Mandatory Module TR-KD-08a. According to the recommended path, the last semester should be entirely dedicated to the Master's thesis, with SE Master's Colloquium being the only course recommended in this semester. This, plus the Master's Thesis and its Defense amount to 26 ECTS (ZTW 2015).

5.1.5. Classification of Courses

The University of Vienna offers examination-based (NPI) and continuous assessment (PI) courses. The former refers to courses in which attendance does not influence the final grade, while in the latter attendance, participation, homework and tests are also used to assess performance. These courses are split into lectures, practical courses, seminars and combined lectures and practical courses. Lectures (VO) serve to present topics, subjects and methods of the study program. They generally conclude with an oral or written examination. Practical courses (UE) serve to demonstrate the students' ability to apply the acquired skills and competencies in translational practice. The assessment in this case is continuous, based on in-class performances. Combined lectures and practical courses (VU) incorporate the objectives and didactic methods of lectures and practical courses by presenting theories and methods in such a way that they can be applied in translational practice. Seminars (SE) are designed for in-depth discussion of selected literature on specific topics and for further training in methods.

They include independent research and scientific writing or the application of special research methods, as well as the presentation and discussion of these in oral and/or written form by the students. The final seminar entitled Master Colloquium also serves to support and advise students in writing their master's thesis in terms of choosing a subject matter and applying methodology (ZTW Curriculum 2015).

The total number of students who can attend a practical course (UE) or a seminar (SE) is 30 and for combined lectures and practical courses (VU) it is 60.

5.1.6. Graduation

According to the 2015 curriculum, the final phase in graduating in Conference Interpreting from the University of Vienna is the mandatory module Master's Colloquium. This module consists of a single seminar, SE Master's Colloquium (4 ECTS) and it is meant to enable students to successfully write their master's thesis in a scientific and methodical way.

The final exams that are considered part of the mandatory module Conference Interpreting II (TR-KD-06) consist of six parts for the language combination A-B-C and A-B-Cx-Cy and four parts for the language combination A-Cx-Cy-Cz. Each of the examination parts is equally taken into account in the assessment of the module examination. The student is assessed by a board of examiners consisting of two teachers from the field of interpreting or teachers who work as interpreters or are certified to do so.

The examination parts are divided into consecutive and simultaneous interpreting and take place on 2 consecutive days. On the first day, all three parts of the simultaneous and consecutive interpreting examinations for the language combinations A-B-C and A-B-Cx-Cy or all two parts of the examination for the language combination A-Cx-Cy-Cz must be passed. In the case of a negative evaluation, the parts that were not passed must be repeated.

For simultaneous interpreting, the duration of the speech is around 10 minutes. For consecutive interpreting, the examination duration per language direction is around 6 minutes and audio or video recordings can be used as source texts for all parts of the examination.

The evaluation criteria for consecutive interpreting are: content - weighing 50% of the overall grade – referring to correctness of content, accuracy (dates, names, numbers), completeness, comprehensibility & coherence, appropriateness for target audience, terminology (if having influence on the content); target language – weighing 30% of the total score and referring to syntax, grammar, complete sentences, idioms, terminology,

lexical/stylistic aspects, language register (appropriateness for the situation), pronunciation and avoidance of interferences and interpretation and presentation amounting to 20% of the total score and referring to fluency, prosody, appearance, body language, problem solving skills, use of interpreting strategies, monitoring/correction of errors and duration of the interpretation. For simultaneous interpreting, the same criteria apply, with one additional focus on the time lag between the original rendition and the target interpretation. All three criterion areas need to be assessed positively in order to pass the final exams.

The final exams take place three times in each semester during the mid-term examination week. The distribution of the students in their examination time slots is posted online a few days in advance. In most cases, students have to take all simultaneous interpreting exams the same day.

The examination subjects are published two weeks in advance and they differ from one language combination to another. For example, in 2021, the subject for simultaneous interpreting for all language combinations was *social and economic systems*. Usually, the subject for all final exams in simultaneous mode is the same for all languages and the ones for the consecutive exams differ from one language to another. In 2021, some of the subjects for the consecutive exams were *alternative economic models, industry 4.0, tourism, medical progress, nutrition* and the *fight against global warming*.

The student has a total of four attempts at taking the final exams. In the event of failure, only the portions of the exam that received a failing grade must be taken again. As soon as all examination parts have been assessed positively, the module examination is considered to have been passed. If the fourth attempt at one of the examination parts is assessed negatively, a repetition of the remaining examination parts is not possible.

In order to graduate, a Master's thesis that comprises around 100 pages and is worth 21 ECTS must be completed. The thesis also demonstrates the student's capacity to do independent research on scientific subjects. The topic of the Master's thesis is to be chosen from sub-areas of Translation Studies and should be feasible to complete within six months.

The prerequisite for admission to the thesis defense is the positive completion of all modules and examinations as well as the positive assessment of the master thesis by the thesis coordinator.

5.2. MEIC Cluj-Napoca

One of Babeş-Bolyai University's biggest faculties is the Faculty of Letters in Cluj-Napoca, which provides teaching in a variety of subjects including philology studies, applied modern languages, modern and classical languages and literatures, cultural studies, ethnology, and ethnography. The department of Applied Modern Languages currently hosts a Bachelor of Arts focused on developing high level skills in translation, professional multilingual communication, linguistic and cultural mediation, a Master's in Conference Interpreting and another Master of Arts in Translation Studies and Terminology.

In Cluj-Napoca, Babeş-Bolyai University offered a total of 3,879 budgeted places and 6,332 taxed places for all its faculties between 2021-2022. Budgeted places are awarded to candidates with the highest average grade at the end of high-school, or once enrolled into college, to those with the highest average grade at the end of each semester. A budgeted place means that the study costs are covered by the state. For the graduate program in conference interpreting, the number of budgeted places in September 2021 was three (UBB Contribution 2022). This means that the first three students with the highest grades who were admitted to the program studied free of charge, while the rest needed to pay a tuition fee of approximately 550 euros per year (UBB Tax 2019). However, a new evaluation takes place every year, which allows students who initially received a taxed position to apply for a budgeted place. Students are evaluated after a year based on their grades from the prior academic year, and those that place first are given budgeted spots (MONITORULCJ 2021).

5.2.1. Duration

The European Master's in Conference Interpreting of Cluj, which had previously been a one-year program, changed to a Bologna-style curriculum in October 2008, lasting two years and including four full semesters of highly specialized instruction. The semesters are divided into summer and winter semesters. In 2021-2022 the winter semester started on September 27 and ended on February 20 and the summer semester started on February 21 and ended on September 25. The foreseen workload for the Master's program in Conference Interpreting is 120 ECTS credits. These credits are equally split within the four semesters, amounting to 30 ECTS credits per semester, with the possibility of graduating with an intermediate certificate

as a community interpreter after the first two semesters (60 ECTS credits). Requirements for graduation as conference interpreter are 120 ECTS credits, plus 20 ECTS credits for the final exam and master's thesis. The Romanian modified linear curriculum model, according to Arjona (1984), poses less discrepancy between the official and the hidden curriculum because of the fixed period of study as a result of a rigorous sequencing of activities.

5.2.2. Languages

In Cluj-Napoca the choice of languages is relatively small, with students who specialize in Conference Interpreting having the possibility to choose from three languages: English, French and Spanish in combination with Romanian. Previously, German and Italian were also offered, however, they are no longer options because of lack of teaching staff. Nevertheless, the department of Modern Applied Languages still holds the EMCI accreditation to teach these languages within the Master's in conference interpreting. Additionally, the students are able to decide whether to divide their working languages into A-B-C combinations, A-Cx-Cy, or A-B-Cx-Cy, with Romanian standing as the requisite A language. Students in Cluj cannot choose a language other than their mother tongue as their A language and they must be able to interpret exclusively into their A language by the end of their studies (MEIC 2022a).

5.2.3. Admission

In accordance with the EMCI standards, the admission to the program consists of an aptitude test and an application file containing documents that attest the identity and previous education of the candidate. During the admission test, candidates are expected to show good concentration, analysis, synthesis and communication skills as well as a high degree of motivation. Only the candidates who have successfully passed the eliminatory written test are then invited to the admission test that consists of two rounds. First, starting from a brief statement, the candidate must present two four-minute speeches in the A and B/Cx languages followed by two summaries in the A language of speeches delivered by the examiner in the B/Cx, Cy/Cz languages. Following this step, the candidates participate in an interview when they give a brief introduction, discuss their goals and, if any, prior experience in the position, and answer a series of questions about EU policies (MEIC 2022a).

The aptitude test is a way for the professors to assess the candidates' adaptability and endurance to stressful, unpredictable circumstances. Listening and speaking skills as well as analysis and synthesis skills are important for passing the test. Specialized/general knowledge questions are part of the aptitude test as they represent important aspects for the profession. The single factor in the ultimate decision, with a pass/fail outcome, is the aptitude exam.

5.2.4. Curriculum Structure

The MEIC curriculum adheres to European standards as it was created in accordance with the EMCI core curriculum and the DG SCIC recommendations. The courses are divided into synthesis courses (DSIN) and in-depth courses (DA) and they are structured in four semesters, with each semester's workload equally amounting to 30 ECTS (MEIC 2022b).

In the first semester, four DSIN: Contemporary Romanian Language I, Language and Cultural Studies I B, Language and Cultural Studies I C and Public Relations (each amounting to 4 ECTS) and two DA courses, Consecutive Interpreting without Notes (11 ECTS) and Interpreting Techniques (3 ECTS) are part of the curriculum.

In the second semester three of the previous synthesis courses (Contemporary Romanian Language II, Language and Cultural Studies II B, Language and Cultural Studies II C) are reintroduced, still amounting to 4 ECTS each and two new in-depth courses are introduced: Consecutive Interpreting with Notes (14 ECTS) and Working Practice I (4 ECTS).

In the third semester, four DA courses are part of the curriculum: Applied Computer Science (4 ECTS), Interpreting Theory I (4 ECTS), Simultaneous Interpreting (15 ECTS) and an Optional Course for 3 ECTS. Also, a synthesis course entitled European Institutions (4 ECTS) is introduced.

In the fourth and last semester, the DSIN course European Economic Policies (4 ECTS) and four in-depth courses: Interpreting Theory II (4 ECTS), Simultaneous Interpreting with Text (15 ECTS), Working Practice II (4 ECTS) and another Optional Course (3 ECTS) constitute the final contents of the program (MEIC 2022b).

The Master's in Conference Interpreting in Cluj-Napoca makes a clear distinction regarding teaching contents between year one and two of the program. In the first year, students focus on consecutive interpreting exclusively. This course, Contemporary Romanian Language I and II, is made up of lectures and seminars with the goal of presenting the main trends in the contemporary Romanian language with regard to its state at the present time, linguistic norms,

its use and the dynamics of the vocabulary, the Romanian language and lexical diversity, English borrowings, Romanian in the media, phraseology, and the structure of utterances in Romanian. Students should gain a general comprehension of the dynamics of the Romanian language and the mechanisms that underlie it in addition to the normative characteristics.

Language and Cultural Studies I in both non-native languages is also a mixture of lectures and seminars in which strategies appropriate for social interaction are discussed. To determine the application of applied linguistics to translating and interpreting procedures, including concerns involving communicative acts, a study of how communication works in English language exchanges (politeness strategies, irony, conversational presuppositions) will be conducted. Also, the cultural aspects will be discussed in close regard to the history of the country, the media and new technologies (MEIC 2022b).

To provide students with the basic skills for performing appropriate consecutive interpreting, a seminar in consecutive interpreting without notes is part of the first semester's curriculum. This course's primary areas of attention include active listening, analysis and synthesis activities (A into A), summaries of brief, straightforward speeches in the B and C languages, and guidelines for giving speeches. Students need to interpret structured, 3-4-minute-long speeches consecutively without taking notes in order to train their public speaking skills and to be introduced to note-taking (MEIC 2022b).

The course Interpreting Techniques is a seminar that provides students with the appropriate tools, both psychological and technical, in order to develop the required professional interpreting skills at a later stage. It is divided into four modules: Module 1: Voice Coaching that lasts for a total of three weeks. Module 2: Stress Management – psychological coaching, also three weeks. Module 3: Note-Taking for Consecutive Interpreting, lasting four weeks and Module 4: Specialized Languages, also four weeks.

The purpose of the Public Relations lecture is to familiarize students with the fundamental PR ideas and tactics, as well as how they function in actual professional settings. It is also meant to develop students' skills in implementing these principles (MEIC 2022b).

The interpreting seminar during the second semester focuses on training students for professional note-taking in order to perform appropriate consecutive interpreting with notes of increasingly difficult speeches. The main topics discussed here are note-taking, community interpreting, sight translation, court interpreting and, optionally, retour, meaning exercises from B to A for those who decide to take the retour exam.

In the second year, students take an applied computer science practical course in order to learn the conceptual framework for documentation and information systems. They also learn

methods and technologies used in order to save, edit and disseminate multimedia content and specialized software (MEIC 2022b).

The third semester's interpreting seminar introduces students to simultaneous interpreting, aiming at a good performance on a structured, 5-6-minute-long speech by the end of the semester. The main topics to be discussed are booth behavior, preparatory exercises, techniques like chunking and anticipation.

The lectures and discussions in Interpreting Theory I and II cover sequential and simultaneous interpreting, conference planning, professional rendition techniques, implicit and explicit speech aspects, background knowledge, ethics, and booth behavior. Also, the research in conference interpreting is planned to be discussed, together with other fundamental concepts explaining the mechanisms of professional interpreting. These classes are designed to provide students a deeper comprehension of speech analysis and the interpreting process in general (MEIC 2022b).

The lecture European Institutions focuses on describing the European mechanisms and basic principles of the European Union to students, offering them an understanding of why multilingualism is important and what the role of interpreters for the European Union is.

In the fourth and final semester, simultaneous exercises from increasingly difficult speeches including specialized fields are chosen for practice. Retour/relay techniques are brought up for mock conferences and the focus is on simultaneous interpreting with text in order to prepare future professionals for real conferences (MEIC 2022b).

The working practice for the Master's program in Conference Interpreting in Cluj-Napoca consists of individual/group work. Working groups of three students must be formed in order to practice together for four to eight hours each week. Participation in various conferences, seminars, and meetings that include interpreting is part of the practice, and students observe the events as well as the efforts of qualified interpreters. The students are the ones who decide the weekly group work schedule and they need to document their progress in a study journal by the end of each week. Individual and group study are required and deemed essential for the successful completion of the program (MEIC 2022b).

5.2.5. Classification of Courses

The department of Applied Languages of Babeş-Bolyai University classifies lectures, seminars and practical courses into so-called in-depth courses (DA) and synthesis courses (DSIN). At the same time, 114 ECTS credits are assigned for the mandatory courses and 6 ECTS credits for the optional courses. On account of a maximum of three optional subjects, the student has the right to choose two subjects from other specializations of the faculties of Babeş-Bolyai University, respecting the conditions of the curricula of those specializations.

5.2.6. Graduation

In order to graduate with a diploma in Conference Interpreting from Babeş-Bolyai University, students must undergo several steps representing the final examinations. In Cluj-Napoca the writing of the Master's thesis represents a preliminary stage before entering the final practical exams. Each student is required to write a well-researched paper on a subject that has a certain connection to the profession of interpreting. The paper has to include a practical chapter, it must be written in the student's B or C language and it should not exceed 30 pages (MEIC 2022a).

All students are assessed at the final examination in consecutive and simultaneous interpreting according to their language combination. ABC, AB with only consecutive interpreting from C, ACC. In order to obtain the EMCI certificate, candidates are required to pass all examinations for each language pair during the same session. It is permitted to retake any exam one time. The students also have the possibility to retake an exam without obtaining an EMCI certificate, but this practice is not encouraged. The final examinations usually take place over two and a half days. One day is assigned for the consecutive interpreting into the A language, one day for the simultaneous interpreting into A and half a day for third C languages, retours and the thesis defense (MEIC 2022a).

The first exam consists of an approximately six-minute consecutive interpreting exam from both the B language and Cx, Cy or Cz language into the A language. The second part is a simultaneous interpreting exam from the B and one of the C languages into the A language that lasts for approximately 13 minutes each. The students are informed about the topic and keywords of each speech ten minutes in advance and can prepare for the exam in a separate

room. The speeches that constitute the examination include a range of topics in several registers and are written to a standard that is frequently encountered by professional interpreters. They are then delivered as if impromptu by practiced speakers. The retour exam is optional and it does not affect the graduation outcome.

The assessment criteria for the final exams are content and presentation. No deviation from the basic structure of the original is permitted, and no more than one significant omission/addition/distortion and/or four minor ones may be made in terms of content. Four minor errors that are unlikely to have a significant impact on the recipient's ability to understand the communication overall, or no more than one big error in the A language, are acceptable. Overall, the rendering of the main ideas, the structure of the target discourse, the quality of the language, the attitude and communication with the audience and the handling of new subject matters are closely observed while assessing final performances (MEIC 2022a).

The majority of the evaluating panel consists of professional interpreters, of whom at least two must combine the candidate's A language with their own, including one who is a native speaker of the examination's target language. Additionally, the panel consists of at least one external examiner who has been invited from The European Institutions, other international organizations, and other EMCI Consortium member institutions. The final decision on the candidates' performance is taken by consensus.

If the final exam is passed, a Master of Arts in Conference Interpreting with the language combination listed and an EMCI Certificate are awarded to the candidate.

The student has the option to retake the exam during the subsequent session, which is held a year later, should they fail any of the exam's components. In this situation, the candidate will have to retake all the parts of the final examination (MEIC 2022a).

6. Interview Study

The findings from the six interviews with the participating students will be examined in the section that follows. While grounded in the available curricular documents described above, this descriptive interview study is mostly based on the student's personal experiences.

The seven categories that resulted from the methodological coding process are meant to guide the reader in understanding how the curriculum was perceived by the six interviewees.

This chapter will discuss the personal motivation of each candidate for studying conference interpreting in their country of choice, the language acquisition and how each university's classification of these languages affected the outcomes of their graduation, the inconsistency recorded in the official curriculum of both universities, how flexibility in choosing the courses influenced the students' necessary graduation time, the actual practice of conference interpreting in an academic environment, the assessment methods and the difficulty that resulted in completing the program.

6.1. Personal Motivation

When asked about their motivation in choosing to study Conference Interpreting in Vienna or Cluj-Napoca, several common incentives were identified for both student categories. A recurrent factor was the country of graduation for the undergraduate studies. Four out of six interviewees said that graduating with their Bachelor's from Cluj or Vienna was what made them choose to pursue a Master's at the same University. In the case of the other two, it was a lack of choice that determined them to study in Vienna. As mentioned in previous chapters and reconfirmed by both subjects, the fact that the Applied Modern Languages department of Babeş-Bolyai University stopped offering German as a working language for the Master's program in 2010 was what determined them to look elsewhere.

The language combination was obviously a deciding factor, because I wasn't going to find my language combination in any other European country. They don't offer Romanian everywhere and so I didn't have many options. I would have liked to be able to continue in Cluj, because I think that the Master's program there is a very good one. I had already studied at the institution and I trusted the quality of that study, but

unfortunately German was not offered and I was forced to look somewhere else. (I-5: 35-40)

Taking this into account, there are very few universities that offer students the possibility to study conference interpreting with Romanian as their first language.

In Romania there are two postgraduate courses for conference interpreting, one in Cluj-Napoca, at Babeş-Bolyai University and one at the University of Bucharest. The latter offers students the possibility to study English, French, German and Spanish in combination with Romanian as the first language. However, although continuing to collaborate closely with the DG Interpretation and SCIC of the European Institutions, the MEFIC (the European Master's for the Formation of Conference Interpreters) in Bucharest lacks the EMCI certification.

I think I had three options in total, one of which was not very viable, Paris. In Paris there was a big risk that if the group didn't form, that I would have to declare another language as A, which I was not very comfortable with. And then I was left with the other two options, which were Vienna or Bucharest and I decided to choose Vienna because I could immerse myself in the language and the culture and I think it helped me progress a lot in perfecting my language. (I-5: 40-45)

London Metropolitan University mentions on their website that studying conference interpreting with Romanian is subject to demand, staff expertise and availability. This means that in order to enroll with Romanian-A, the student needs to know if the number of interested students that are accepted in the program is high enough to form a working group and if staff is available to support the group. The same applies at ISIT Paris. In this case, English and French are required in any language combination, and ISIT also offers instruction in any other language for which there is a demand and qualified teachers are available. In 2020-2021, the Conference Interpreting program did not offer Romanian. The only university outside of Romania currently providing a Master's degree in Conference Interpreting that combines German and Romanian is the University of Vienna.

Different educational mobilities also play a role in the choice of where to study. Most European universities offer students access to international scholarships like ERASMUS,

CEEPUS⁴, DAAD⁵, in order to enable them to experience the educational system of other countries and broaden their perspectives. This was also the case for interviewee I-2, who stated that despite her initial struggles, she ultimately chose to enroll in the Master's program in Austria because she had the opportunity to study in Vienna during the last year of her Bachelor's degree thanks to a collaboration between Babeş-Bolyai University and the University of Vienna:

I had an Erasmus scholarship during my Bachelor's degree. I chose Vienna without even knowing that it was the only place I could work with Romanian. And, because I really liked it here, I came back for my Master's. Other than that, in Cluj you don't have the option to do this Master's with German as a working language. These were the key points, I liked Vienna very much and I didn't have a choice, I had to choose between Bucharest and Vienna, and the obvious choice was the latter. (I-2: 38-43)

Interviewee I-5 brought up the financial issue, which will be covered in more detail in the chapter on *Flexibility*, when questioned about her personal motivations for studying in Vienna. Mentionable for now is the fact that the minimum gross wage in the Romanian economy as of January 2022 is of approximately 515 euros (Hot News 2021). The minimum wage in Austria is 1500 euros as of January 2017 (Expatica 2022), which is over three times the minimum wage in Romania. Despite of this, with proper budgeting, financial aid or a salary in the country, living and studying in Austria has proven to be feasible, according to I-5.

It was affordable. The tuition fee is not high at all and the living standard is good. Even though I come from an economically weaker country, I still managed with a little effort to start a life in Vienna and stay here without having major financial difficulties. (I-5: 46-51)

⁴ Central European Exchange Program for University Studies

⁵ German Academic Exchange Service

6.2. Language Classification

As an integral part of the education of professional conference interpreters, the subject of language classification is very complex. Working languages represent an essential tool for the interpreters' work, because without working languages enabling communication across linguistic and cultural boundaries would simply be impossible. However, it should be taken into account that language classification systems are prone to errors: "When discussing language classification systems, it should be borne in mind that these systems are not flawless" (Gorton 2012: 78).

Closely related to the question of how working languages are defined is the question of who makes these definitions. As previously mentioned, the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) plays an essential role as a regulating body in the world of conference interpreting. When applying for membership in the association, it is up to the interpreters themselves to decide whether they consider a working language to be an A, B or a C language.

This also applies to the Master's program in conference interpreting in Vienna. Although it is recommended that the student declares his/her mother tongue as the A language in the working language combination, the choice belongs to the student entirely and it is not strictly regulated. However, the choice of the A language influences the classification of the other working languages. If this is not German, the only possible language combinations are A-B-C or A-B-Cx-Cy, with the prerequisite that one must be able to interpret from the C into the B language, in this case, German. The question that arises in this case is what differentiates the A language from the B language if being able to interpret into German from both A and the C language is mandatory?

I knew I couldn't take them [the working languages] any other way. I had some reservations when I was told that once I choose English, that I couldn't change it anymore and that I had to take the exam out of all three languages at the end, but otherwise I didn't question the choice of working languages. (I-2: 68-70)

For students with Romanian-A this meant taking mandatory exams in simultaneous and consecutive interpreting from a non-native language (C) into another (B), a practice that is not encouraged in any interpreting manuals. While the choice of the A language was flexible, it

was also binding. In Vienna, retour exams are mandatory due to the language of instruction being German.

To a certain extent I was able to choose them [the working languages] as I wanted, because Vienna gives me the possibility to choose Romanian as my A language, which I thought was very important, so it was a big plus for me. What I think is a pity, and indeed where I didn't manage to do exactly as I wanted, was to add my fourth language. I would ideally have liked to have a A-Bx-By-C combination, the B languages being German and English. Unfortunately, it wasn't possible because German wasn't my A language. (I-5: 117-122)

However, as the same interviewee mentioned later on, the fact that the program allows students to declare their working languages as they wish meant that she would have been able to choose a language other than Romanian as her A language. Because no student was encouraged or formally given the option to declare a language other than their native language as an A, this practice can be considered as an element of the hidden curriculum. This practice, while not encouraged, allows students who are confident enough in their language skills to add more languages to their combination.

If I had declared German as my A language, which interestingly enough is possible, I would have technically been able to [study interpreting in the language combination I wanted]. I even think I could have eventually passed my exams although I don't have German-A by any means. I know colleagues who chose German-A even though they had another mother tongue and I think they passed their exams. They [the program administration] check if you have a certain level in those languages, but it is up to you whether you declare those languages as A, B or C. (I-5: 122-127)

In 2015 the General Assembly of AIIC changed the regulations regarding admission to the association and language classifications. Thus, interpreters who wish to become AIIC members must apply with concrete language combinations, specifying whether the target language is an A or a B language. The stated goal of this adjustment is to make it easier for potential clients to identify which interpreters are available in which language combinations by

clearly displaying the potential language pairings of each association member in the AIIC Directory.

The AIIC's language classification is ultimately intended to both represent the profession to the outside world and simultaneously ensure that the necessary abilities are available internally. Very important is the realization that a working language may be considered a B language at a given point in time, but that this classification does not hold forever.

At MEIC you're not required to have a B language. They encourage you to, if you show a good enough language level, but if the teachers see that you're barely getting by in French they won't tell you to take an exam [into French]. They'll let you go at your own pace and they'll make sure that, first of all, your Romanian is at the right level. (I-3: 92-95)

Within the framework of the EU, interpreting into the B language is referred to as *retour*. Working “from the interpreter's mother tongue into a second active language” is how this form of interpreting is described on the website of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Interpretation (SCIC) (SCIC 2022). Moreover, this type of interpreting is presented as particularly useful in conjunction with relay interpreting, especially when the source language is not widely spoken, as in the case of Romanian. Furthermore, *retour* interpreting is considered rather exceptional and it applies to only a few interpreters. This could also explain why in Cluj, students are not encouraged to declare a B language unless they feel confident in doing so.

The main idea is that [in Cluj] we start with two C languages and then starting with the second semester you can choose if you want to turn a C language into a B language, which you basically only do at the final exam. You can, you don't have to, and a lot of people don't. I was the only one who took the retour exam in my generation. And even if there isn't a particular time allocated for practice, at the end of each course the professors take time to give you feedback and further resources. I definitely had constant support, even if I didn't have a strictly structured course for it. (I-1: 104-111)

Interestingly enough, even though students have the option of declaring a B language and taking a retour exam, there are no official courses in the curriculum for this practice. It is therefore part of the hidden curriculum that professors and students agree upon a system of practice and feedback. With the retour exam being optional, it does not affect the outcome for graduation.

Nevertheless, as it affects the program's outcomes, a precise language classification is crucial. This could be seen in the case of I-4 and I-6 who had failed their final exams with English.

According to my Master's degree, I work from English and French into Romanian. According to my work experience outside of the Master's and the interpreting opportunities I had so far, I only worked from Romanian into Italian and vice versa. I've never worked anywhere with English and French. (I-4: 23-25)

Having graduated with Italian as a working language from her Bachelor's in Cluj and having had the confirmation from the program coordinator that Italian was an option for the Master's, she came to the admission exams only to be told that Italian was not offered anymore.

The reasoning was that there were no teachers for Italian for the Master's program, and because the program coordinator knew from my undergraduate studies that I was interested in the MA, and because there were so few candidates enrolled, she decided not to tell me until the last minute that they didn't have Italian and to rely on my linguistic flexibility to persuade me to enroll. (I-4: 94-98)

This proves that language proficiency plays a huge role in the language classification and it should not be treated light-heartedly as it can influence whether the outcome of the study is positive or not. Especially with English where the proficiency expectations for conference interpreters are very high.

While all students admitted to knowing they needed an advanced level of German to study conference interpreting in Austria, all three interviewees found interpreting from one non-native language into another, without the option to withdraw from the exam or change their specialization, very constraining. This may possibly be the reason why, as of the time of

writing, the University of Vienna has not produced any conference interpreting graduates with Romanian A since 2017.

If you ask me now, maybe I would have just chosen Romanian-German because I have friends who passed their exams much easier. And I wouldn't have chosen conference interpreting, I would have chosen dialogue interpreting because it was the field I was working in anyway. But I chose my languages as I wanted without knowing that I couldn't change my specialization during the course of my studies. (I-6: 53-57)

Even more intriguing in this light is the fact that, despite the University of Vienna's option to select Romanian as an A language, there is not much of a practical distinction between the A and B languages. All students in Vienna reported that their communication skills in German and Romanian improved considerably, to a similar level in both languages.

6.3. Inconsistency

Having previously discussed the admission procedures for each university, we will now take a closer look at each of these procedures as experienced by the students. The reason for doing this is because the admission procedures have often proven to be inconsistent. This affects the way the student interacts with the curriculum from the very beginning. Although the admission is not part of the curriculum per se, it inevitably conditions students' access to the learning contents of each program. As previously described, both universities require a BA in translation or in a field related to translation or an external certification of the candidate's working languages. The fact that the University of Vienna doesn't require an admission exam is against the common practice in most interpreting schools.

Basically, what I was asked to provide were some documents proving my language level and the contents I had studied. They check the transcript of records not only for language proficiency but also for contents. In my case they found some gaps that I had to compensate for by taking four additional courses, which I didn't find unreasonable in itself. It seemed normal to me that there should be differences because it's a different study in a different country. (I-5: 93-98)

It is crucial to keep in mind that many people have developed professional skills without receiving official training in the field because the translation market is often unregulated. This suggests that there is a secondary market for educational programs that can certify the necessary abilities for translation and interpreting professions. While the admission procedures for each university have been previously described, there are certain problematic aspects of the process that can be attributed to the hidden curriculum.

I applied by submitting my file and waited for quite long to get that Zulassungsbescheid [confirmation of admission], that was it. I had to prove my knowledge of the languages, which I did through my Bachelor's degree. I was assigned six additional courses, and at first, I didn't find it so problematic. I didn't like it because a lot of it was theoretical, which didn't necessarily benefit me, because it wasn't something that would enrich my interpreting experience, but I didn't mind so much because I didn't know what it was like for others. (I-2: 52-57)

At the University of Vienna, students who graduated from an undergraduate program other than the one in Transcultural Communication offered by the Center for Translation Studies, the University of Innsbruck or Graz had to prove a degree equivalence that matched the Austrian BA. This involved comparing the contents of each undergraduate program and it almost always resulted in a number of additional courses in order to achieve full equivalence.

It bothered me, however, when I found out that other colleagues who had completed the same degree in Cluj had fewer additional courses. I had also studied in Vienna for two semesters during my Erasmus year and I had completed all the practical Romanian courses from the Master's program. Including Konferenzdolmetschen [conference interpreting] twice, and yet I had six extra courses while others had four. (I-2: 57-61)

Both interviewees who entered the Master's program in Vienna after completing their Bachelor's degree in Applied Modern Languages in Cluj-Napoca regarded the requirement of additional coursework for admission as normal. However, the lack of consistency between the admission procedures when it comes to additional courses was something both of them found questionable.

What didn't seem normal to me was that I and two other colleagues who were in an absolutely identical situation, i.e., we enrolled at the same institute in Austria, in the same year, after having studied at the same institution in Romania, with the same contents, but each received a different number of additional courses. It seems to me that the selection process is sometimes arbitrary and other decisions within the institute are sometimes arbitrary too. (I-5: 103-108)

The number of additional courses is decided by the Program Administration and it is approached individually for each student. This is one of the reasons why the administration will not accept comparative arguments between individual admission requirements. But when asked to be treated individually, as in the case of interviewee I-2, who had already completed some courses during her Erasmus semester, she was told that the University of Vienna makes every effort to ensure that all students can complete their studies as quickly as possible and that the requirements of a curriculum are to be followed by all students regardless of previously graduated courses. How students actually organize their course of studies is the responsibility of each individual student.

It didn't seem fair to me at all. I wrote to the Studienprogramleitung [Study Program Administration] and the final argument was that if I enrolled in September, the most recent curricular rules already applied starting September, which were different from the ones before I enrolled. This problem has been with me throughout my studies because I need to take six extra exams. (I-2: 61-66)

The issue of inconsistency seems to follow students along the entire course of study. In the case of the recommended path described in chapter 5.1.4., which is meant to enable students to graduate in four semesters, the practical course UE Conference Interpreting I is part of the third semester. The course is only provided during the summer semester, though. For students who start in October and who rely on the recommended path, this would automatically prolong the study period by at least one semester. Access to the final exams is also only possible upon completion of this course.

We were not allowed to sign up for the final exams unless we had all our grades in, while also not being allowed to send in a confirmation from the teacher that we will

pass the course, which could be done in the past. It could no longer be done in the year I signed up [for the final exams]. I know people who to this day still have final exams to pass because of this. And we ended up in this situation after following the recommended curricular path and actually following the recommendations of the institute, so there are definitely aspects that should be worked on to standardize things. (I-5: 108-115)

Another aspect regarding the recommended path is that the practical course Conference Simulation, which also counts as the student's practical experience in the field, is recommended in the same semester as several advanced simultaneous interpreting courses and the lecture Conference Terminology and International Organizations. However, the description of the practical course Conference Simulation clearly states that participation in the course only makes sense after several completed courses in simultaneous interpreting and should ideally be taken after finishing the lecture Conference Terminology and International Organizations.

It is also noteworthy to note that although while students with A languages other than German are not required to complete advanced courses for this language combination, they must take mandatory final exams in simultaneous and consecutive interpreting from the C- into the B language. Because it is a difficult task in itself, most students admit to not taking Simultaneous and Consecutive Interpreting II in the above-mentioned language combination, but find the fact that it is not mandatory counter-productive.

Inconsistency could be recorded to a certain extent at Babeş-Bolyai University as well. Prior knowledge about the program and graduation from the Applied Modern Languages Bachelor's in Cluj represented a disadvantage for interviewee I-4, who had Romanian-Italian-French as her language combination during her Bachelor's. It was only on the day of the admission exam that she was told that Italian was not offered and that her only possibility to enroll in the program was to choose English instead.

I went to the admission exams that morning convinced that I would draw one ticket in French and one in Italian. When I got there, I was told that this [English-French] was what I would be doing for my Master's degree and that if I didn't agree with it that I was free to go. Of course, I didn't leave, even though it was the first time I had ever attempted a consecutive from English, but because I spoke the language, I managed to pass. I didn't even have time to process what the language change meant. (I-4: 90-94)

Similar to the ZTW's suggested study path, this problem may have been prevented with careful research, but it nevertheless shows inconsistency on the part of the university and raises questions about the program's credibility. Both Italian and German were previously part of the language offer within the Master's program in Conference Interpreting at Babeş-Bolyai University and they can still be found as offered languages in official documents. While the Applied Modern Languages department is accredited to teach those languages according to EMCI standards, it did not dispose of the necessary teaching staff at the time of writing.

6.4. Flexibility

In the context of the current study, the term flexibility refers to the students' ability to organize curricular contents according to personal preference, available time and financial resources. The curricular layouts, work-study balance and cost of each program have proven to affect the outcomes for each MA designed to last two years.

6.4.1. Curricular Conditions

As previously mentioned in chapter 5.1.1, seen from an organizational standpoint, the MA in Vienna enables students to choose the order in which they attend courses, allowing them to plan their schedule according to time and financial resources.

I had some flexibility [in how I completed my courses] in the sense that I could organize certain courses within the modules, but nevertheless the system seems absolutely absurd to me, because you have that period [after the first semester] in which you can choose your specialization, either Conference Interpreting or Dialog Interpreting. For me it [the choice] was clear from the very beginning, and there were courses I couldn't do because I didn't have my specialization declared. (I-2: 73-77)

However, not every aspect of the curriculum in Vienna is flexible. With a binding choice of specialization that can only be declared after the first semester, students do not have

the possibility to change the specialization or attend courses that are designed for their specialization before declaring it.

I already knew my specialization, plus I was working 30 hours a week and had no time to waste. A big discussion going back to last semester is that I couldn't do Konferenzdolmetschen [Conference Interpreting, course in TR-KD-06] because I didn't complete module I. I only needed to take a course that I am currently enrolled in and I asked if, since the Romanian group is so small and there is always a risk for the course not to take place, if I couldn't take it this semester. (I-2: 78-83)

The prerequisites discussed in chapter 5.1.4 that refer to the mandatory completion of certain modules before being able to enter more advanced modules or final exams also limit flexibility and potentially increase the necessary time for completing the program.

In Vienna, students are able to take the same course more than once, either to better their grade or just for more practice, due to the curricular framework that allows the same subject to be offered in consecutive semesters. With the number of Romanian-A students being so small it is not at all uncommon for students to take certain courses multiple times, despite having passed them. This usually happens either because students want to practice more or because they are asked by their professors to participate in the course in order to allow their peers, who run the risk of not having enough colleagues for the class to take place, to do so.

The graduation requirements also influence the flexibility and necessary time to complete each degree. While students in Cluj-Napoca can only take the final exams once a year, they have the option to take retour-interpreting exams or not. Retour exams are required in Vienna, but there are several examination dates each year, and students are given a total of four chances to pass each exam.

With its rather rigid curricular structure, the MEIC does not allow students to take courses in any other order than the one planned in the official curriculum. This can influence the work-study balance in the sense that it makes having a job and studying at the same time more difficult. In this regard, I-4 mentions that professors even discouraged students from being employed while pursuing the Master's degree.

6.4.2. Financial Conditions

Financially, my parents were the ones who supported me. I would like to point out that during the whole Master's period we were constantly told not to get a job. Classes were always in the mornings and we were constantly told not to distract ourselves by committing to a job. I listened, thinking that I would repay my parents once I graduated. (I-4: 67-71)

As discussed in chapter 5.1 and 5.2, both the University of Vienna and Babeş-Bolyai University offer students access to graduate degrees for a fairly small tuition fee, provided they fulfill certain requirements. In this regard, financial flexibility is crucial to the required graduation period.

The state funds the budgeted places. There were five or six budgeted places the year I signed up, I think, and we were seven [enrolled in the Master's]. So, the seventh person was supposed to pay the tuition fee, but this person dropped out super-fast, one month after we started. But I personally had a budgeted place and a merit scholarship for all four semesters. (I-1: 69-72)

Students also have the possibility to finance themselves through scholarships or social financial aid. Babeş-Bolyai University grants special merit scholarships and social grants. The requirement for obtaining a merit or performance scholarship from UBB is that the student is a full-time student⁶ and has consistent excellent results. Social aid scholarships are permanent once granted.

These scholarships were offered after the exams in the first semester. There were two scholarships in total, the merit scholarship was 700 lei per month [approx. 150 euros] and the performance scholarship was 1000 lei [approx. 200 euros] for the person who was first after the first exam session. As it happens, I was first after the first session,

⁶ A full-time student is a student who has obtained a minimum of 30 credits in compulsory and optional subjects in the examination session preceding the semester for which he/she is applying for a scholarship (UBB Student Aid 2022).

but that year the rules changed and the performance scholarship was only given to the person who had a clean ten [maximum score] and I had nine in interpreting because no one ever gets ten in interpreting. (I-1: 73-80).

The University of Vienna also offers a number of merit and performance scholarships, but also scholarships for students with disabilities, asylum seekers, and social grants. Under Austrian law, parents are obliged to provide for their children's financial needs until they reach the age of self-support. This also covers the time required to finish a specialized course of study. Financial support services only step in when parents or the student themselves are unable to pay the expenses of a course of study out of their own funds. This also results in the two essential eligibility requirements, social eligibility and proof of commitment by obtaining a minimum of 20 ECTS after the second semester and 90 ECTS after the sixth semester (Financial Support Services 2022).

6.5. Practice

One of the fundamental aspects of curriculum and the way it is experienced is represented by the actual implementation of the practical courses. In order to see how practice influences the quality of study, this chapter will address the size of the work groups for each language, the order in which the two modes of interpreting are introduced into practice, different note-taking practices and professional practice opportunities.

Almost all Conference Interpreting graduate programs focus on interpreting practice, rather than giving ample theoretical insight. While all participants reported on being pleased with the practical approach to learning adopted by both universities, some significant differences could be noticed in regards to the practice during these courses.

6.5.1. Language Combination

The language combination has proven to be an important factor when looking at the amount of practice each student would undergo during a regular interpreting class. Having a smaller language offer, the standard work group at Babeş-Bolyai University rarely exceeded six students.

We were all in Romanian-A and we were all in English and French. So, we started seven and after the first month we were six, and in the second year there were five of us left, because one colleague froze her year. We were a very small number [of students] and we all worked together because we all had the same language combination. (I-1: 134-137)

In Vienna, on the other hand, the large number of offered languages and the variable language combinations determine a very different distribution in practice groups. For Romanian, however, the groups have always been rather small. This represented a problem when the minimal number of students needed for a course to take place was not met. In order to avoid this situation, the solution offered by the program administration was to combine language groups for smaller languages. Romanian was often combined with Hungarian, Portuguese, Bosnian, Serbian, Croatian or even Italian. This way, most courses would be taught by two professors, one responsible for each language, and the practice of retour interpreting would be a necessary part of the course.

In Romanian there were three of us, maybe four, but in Dialogdolmetschen [dialog interpreting] we were paired with the Italian group, where there were about 12-13 students. In Simultan II [course in simultaneous interpreting] we had three colleagues with Hungarian[-German] and three of us had Romanian[-German]. In English [interpreting courses] there were more of us. I did Simultaneous I, and I think there were between 9 and 11. And in consecutive I [first course in consecutive interpreting] there were 15 of us. (I-2: 95-98)

A big difference could be noticed in groups with German, English and French. Having a larger number of students for these languages, the working groups could reach the maximum capacity of 30 students. According to I-5, this limited the amount of practice considerably. For the French classes, the professors would split the group in two and each group would be able to practice every other week.

There were some differences, indeed, and this was also felt in the course dynamics. In Romanian we always had small groups because we were very few. The groups were between two and five people approximately, and in French I think the biggest group I

ended up working in was almost 20 people. Usually what happened in this case was that the course was divided into two and we each worked for 45 minutes, either that, or each group came to class every other week. (I-5: 142-148)

The same student talked about how interpreting from C into B was practiced very little, despite the fact that it is a mandatory examination part for graduation.

I feel that in French we practiced less. I can't say that I was bothered by this because I don't find it a useful language combination [interpreting from C to B] for those of us who don't have German-A, so I can't say that it frustrated me very much that I couldn't interpret more from French into German. If it had been from French into Romanian, I might have been more upset. (I-5: 148-152)

I-6 also addressed the issue of being unable to take the desired English interpreting course due to the high number of students who had registered for it. The University of Vienna offered a solution to this problem by having more professors teach the same course in parallel for languages with larger numbers of students, such as English or French.

In English there were a lot of us, 30 or so... you were on the Warteliste [waiting list], sometimes you didn't even get a spot in class... while in Romanian there were very few. The advantage was that we worked more, really, that you could feel the progress much faster, whereas in English you did two interpreting tasks per semester, so to speak. (I-6: 72-75)

6.5.2. Group Size

The size of the student groups in individual interpreting courses represents a significant difference between the two programs.

In Cluj, because the total number of students was so small, they all got to work intensively and receive ample individual feedback. Unofficially, students from successive generations would unite in mock conferences in the attempt to create larger work groups and

simulate conference situations. While part of the hidden curriculum, this also represents the fulfillment of the EMCI promise in which students practice with EU Interpreters.

I belonged to a generation where we started six and by the end there were five of us left, so inevitably the biggest group was in English [interpreting courses] where we were five. In French there were three of us. In the first year we sometimes had joint meetings with our colleagues from second year who were about six or seven, and then when we were in our second year, we had joint classes with first year who were about five or six. These weren't specific classes in the calendar. (I-3: 115-121)

I-5 mentioned that she felt a significant difference in practice and feedback between the smaller group for Romanian and the larger French group, mentioning that the amount of practice she had thanks to the smaller group was significantly greater than the one for her other language combination.

In Romanian for example, if you have a consecutive course, there everyone interprets at least twice, if not three times, 5–6-minute passages where you also get feedback, so it's very productive to have a course like that where you have so few people. In French on the other hand, exactly because the teachers couldn't spend too much time giving you feedback if there were 10-15 of us in the group, my turn to interpret came around once or twice and I used to get punctual but relatively short feedback and then we would move on. (I-5: 152-159)

I-6 who started her Master's in 2016 confirmed that interpreting in larger groups affected the amount of practice and the progress that would follow, but she also addressed an interesting detail about how the Romanian group would grow during the year. The Erasmus mobility, among others, represented a great opportunity for interpreting students from Romania to come and practice in a more international environment and also help the local students from Vienna practice with other people than their few peers and teachers.

There were very few of us, sometimes six, sometimes five, very, very few. It depended on the semester. We had more people coming in with different mobilities from Cluj or from Bucharest. (I-6: 76-78)

As a general conclusion, data collected in the interviews shows that the size of the work-group is directly related to the language combination and it can influence the student's progress significantly. A smaller working group allows more practice and individual feedback.

6.5.3. Progression

While the separation between consecutive interpreting and simultaneous interpreting is meant to assure a gradual familiarization with each interpreting mode, it has not been described as something completely positive by those studying at Babeş-Bolyai University. According to them, the problem was that not practicing consecutive interpreting in an organized manner after the first two semesters lead to having large difficulties in passing the final exams in this mode. As part of the hidden curriculum, professors would offer students the possibility to practice consecutive interpreting during other simultaneous interpreting classes, but students would have to train individually in order not to lose the necessary skills.

According to the curricula, we study consecutive interpreting in the first year and simultaneous interpreting in the second year, but the truth is that in the second year we continue with some consecutive exercises because otherwise we would lose the knowledge and practice that we later need for the final exam. (I-3: 124-127)

Babeş-Bolyai University separates the two modes not only into different courses, but also into different years of study. Interviewee I-3, who graduated in 2020, mentions that this distribution gave her the wrong impression that consecutive interpreting would be easier, because it was taught first.

I think in terms of how I perceive the order in which the two interpreting modes are taught, the fact that I learned them one at a time gave me the very wrong impression that it would be easier to interpret consecutively, and then when I had to do it, I realized that it wasn't really like that. There is so much more you have to pay attention to when you're in the viewer's eye and you're much more aware of yourself, of your body language, of your gestures, of how you express yourself. I find consecutive more challenging sometimes. (I-3: 133-138)

Two out of three interviewees reported that this practice was not ideal. They mentioned believing that training in both modes in the same semester would have helped them understand certain cognitive processes and not lose skills in consecutive interpreting.

My personal experience is that consecutive interpreting is very difficult, but I noticed that it improved after I started interpreting simultaneously. I can't figure out exactly why, maybe it was because I was quite slow at consecutive and I think interpreting simultaneously made me speed things up a bit. Or it helped me make certain connections in my brain, different connections than I had before, and I became much better at consecutive after I started simultaneous. (I-1: 147-152)

Interviewee I-1 goes as far as to mention noticing a pattern among peers when it comes to the improvement of consecutive interpreting skills after starting simultaneous interpreting.

And I noticed that in other colleagues as well, so I think it was a pattern. Maybe I would have seen things differently if we had done both simultaneous and consecutive in the same semester. Maybe it would have helped to have at least, I don't know, an introductory course into simultaneous interpreting from the middle of the second semester. Maybe I would have felt a bigger difference. (I-1: 152-157)

Another intriguing fact is that, despite the fact that the Master's program in Cluj clearly distinguishes between interpreting modes, it also gives students the chance to practice simultaneous interpreting in actual settings before even introducing the concept to them in class. Interviewee I-4 mentioned that, as part of the hidden curriculum, one of their teachers invited them to trade unionist meetings where they would interpret for a couple of days and get paid for their work through her. This happened during the first semester when students had no experience with interpreting whatsoever. The same interviewee describes the drastic separation of interpreting modes as being counterproductive and having affected her at the final exam.

There was no overlap between consecutive and simultaneous. In the first year we only focused on consecutive. We found out about simultaneous only because one of our teachers took us to Bucharest to interpret at a unionists' meeting. The second year we focused only on simultaneous. To me that seems stupid, because in the first year you

get to a good level of consecutive, in the second year you do simultaneous and you hardly go back to consecutive at all in class. If you don't practice on your own, you forget everything you learned. (I-4: 120-125)

As opposed to interviewee I-3, interviewee I-4 did not see the few and far in between consecutive exercises which are part of the hidden curriculum as enough practice.

You forget to take notes, you forget to decipher your writing, and you forget the whole set of basic rules that apply to consecutive. That's why I think that the fact that the first year of consecutive is so drastically separated from the second year of simultaneous is not thought out well and it affects students at the final exam. (I-4: 125-132)

In Vienna on the other hand, the open curriculum model allows students to study both modes in the same semester. This practice is also endorsed in the recommended study path. According to the three interviewees, studying both modes in the same semester was beneficial for the amount of practice and for the cognitive processes they developed and applied from learning one mode to the other.

In the first semester of my Master's degree, I did simultaneous and consecutive in parallel. I find it important to do them in parallel because it automatically doubles the amount of practice. You don't have just one course a week but two and even though I find it to maybe not be the smoothest introduction into the field, but it's a shortcut that helps a lot. (I-2: 101-104)

Interviewee I-5 mentions how the skills acquired in consecutive interpreting classes helped her improve her simultaneous technique when it comes to synthesizing dense information.

Since the division of courses is up to me, I decided to do consecutive and simultaneous at the same time. I can clearly say that my experiences from one course influenced me in the other. I think I was especially influenced by the consecutive in simultaneous, because in consecutive interpreting I worked a lot on my capacity to synthesize what was being said and this technique works very well in simultaneous when you have to

deal with a very dense discourse and you have to leave some of the information out to be able to keep up with the speaker. (I-5: 162-170)

The same interviewee mentioned that her note-taking technique in consecutive interpreting was a result of all of the consecutive classes she took, emphasizing the importance of combining courses in order to increase the amount of practice. From this point of view, the students in Vienna were very happy with the way they learned to interpret in both modes. Their experience could confirm the beliefs of the students in Cluj that learning both modes in parallel speeds up the development of certain cognitive processes that are necessary for interpreting.

6.5.4. Note-taking

The approach towards note-taking and teaching note-taking techniques is fairly disputed in conference interpreting literature. Jean Herbert is considered to be the one who put note-taking on the agenda of interpreter training. He regarded notes as an essential element for developing a consecutive interpreting technique that could make or break a performance and that required extensive, systematic practice (1952: 36). Later, in 1989 Matyssek proposed an elaborate symbol-based system of note-taking. Nonetheless, his position was clear: the student should not adopt Matyssek's system and symbols as a whole, but use this information to develop a personal system that meets the needs of the individual.

In this regard, when asked about how note-taking was taught in the two MA programs, the answers differed from one group to another. Students from Cluj reported not having separate classes for note-taking. The way they learned these techniques was during their second semester as part of the course Consecutive Interpreting with Notes. In Vienna, the mandatory course Note-taking Techniques is part of the official curriculum. Students have the possibility to take this course as many times as they wish and there are different professors who teach it. In Cluj, the same course, consecutive interpreting with notes, is taught by different professors. According to interviewee I-1, this was regarded positively because it would offer students an insight into each professor's personal technique, which would help with the later development of their own note-taking systems.

We did not have separate note-taking classes. We had about four or five teachers for the subject consecutive interpreting with notes for the different working languages, or even within the same language. Each teacher had their own technique, which was very interesting. And each teacher showed us their own note-taking techniques and they expected us to create our own note-taking system. (I-1: 159-164)

However, the same student mentions that a separate course in note-taking would have been beneficial for him, as taking notes was one of the biggest difficulties he had to deal with when interpreting consecutively.

A separate note-taking class was discussed a lot and we were asked if we thought one would be necessary. I think everyone said yes. Who knows, maybe in the future they will reintroduce it, I know in the past there has been one, we were told there was a specific course for note-taking. (I-1: 170-172)

While all interviewees either had online courses or exams due to the Covid-19 pandemic, one interviewee in particular mentioned missing out on the experience of being in class physically in regards to note-taking classes.

Note-taking was the hardest part for me. I couldn't read my notes very well and it also coincided with the start of the pandemic and I think I missed out on that experience of being in class, taking notes with your classmates and then comparing them. Physically comparing notes side by side is different than doing it online. I really missed out on that experience and I think I missed it because I didn't have a separate class for note-taking. (I-1: 165-169)

While the opinions on the relevance of separate note-taking classes differed from one student to another, one common point consisted in the fact that for five out of six interviewees the note-taking technique was presented as something personal that would have to be developed by each of them individually. Most of the time, teachers would walk students through the fundamentals of taking notes, show them symbols, and offer suggestions, but in the end, students would need to find their own note-taking method. Only one student reported having

had a bad experience in which the professor imposed their note-taking technique in class, and expected all students to adopt it.

I took the note-taking course because it was mandatory. I already had a note-taking technique since my Erasmus year in Vienna. For me the course was a big hassle and a big distraction. I didn't learn much, maybe some new symbols, but that was it. Otherwise, on the contrary, there was a great tension between me and the teacher because I didn't feel like her note-taking technique was right for me. She was imposing her personal technique, but I think that note-taking should be something individual. (I-2: 108-114)

This represents a negative aspect of the hidden curriculum. For the most part, both students in Cluj and Vienna said that their note-taking technique was developed through more than just the designated note-taking class. They said that every course and individual practice where they addressed a new subject matter helped them develop new symbols and improve their note-taking technique. Therefore, as with most aspects of interpreting, a good note-taking system is a result of intense practice and exposure to different subjects.

6.5.5. Training Speeches

When asked to describe a typical interpreting course, most students expressed similar approaches to preparation, the subjects that were discussed and the ways in which they gave and received feedback. Subjects of current interest from the news or previous final exams would often constitute practice material. Students would then fill out personal and/or shared glossaries and get acquainted with the subject by reading, listening or writing on it. However, a difference in practice was noticed regarding the speakers that delivered speeches for the practical interpreting courses. In Vienna, either the teachers or the students would write speeches for their colleagues to interpret, or video content from different platforms would be used during the interpreting courses. In Cluj on the other hand, teachers went out of their way to find native speakers willing to deliver speeches in their native language and give feedback. Also, as part of the EMCI agreement, students in Cluj often had training sessions with professional interpreters from the European institutions.

We had native speakers, I don't know where my teachers' inventiveness came from, but they found an American, a Brit, a Frenchman in Cluj and they brought them in to hold speeches for us and give us feedback on their native language. Even if they weren't interpreters, they could tell us how to make our interpretation sound more natural in the foreign language. (I-3: 262-265)

Considering the fact that the majority of the teaching staff in Vienna is fluent in the majority of the languages offered by the program, it was uncommon for guest speakers to give lectures during routine interpreting classes. Oftentimes, students would have to act as experts and prepare speeches on subjects they were not at all familiar with. While this could be regarded as good terminological practice, a student giving a speech on an unfamiliar subject is far from the reality of an expert giving a speech that needs to be interpreted.

In Cluj, because the native-speakers had nothing to do with the interpreting profession per se, they would be selected based on their abilities to deliver quality speeches. Also, thanks to the EMCI partnership, the high-quality speeches were assured by professional interpreters from the EU institutions.

We had other speakers who didn't do as well at giving speeches and in time, they were not invited to class anymore. Then we also had guests from parliament who were interpreters, so automatically we had high quality speeches. They would come to train us in the so-called BVCs, bilateral-virtual-classes, I think. (I-4: 180-183)

In this sense, the students' experience in Cluj was more similar to the reality of the profession in which different speakers have different delivery styles. The students in Vienna also discussed a variety of topics in their interpreting classes, but they mostly spoke about how they had to become knowledgeable on particular topics in order to provide convincing speeches. Because students were familiar with the speech delivery styles of their peers, this frequently resulted in a certain monotony. A larger variety of speakers was seen as potentially beneficial.

6.5.6. Professional Practice

Neither in Vienna nor in Cluj do students have a mandatory internship or the possibility to interpret in an official setting as part of the official curriculum. The ‘professional practice’ in Vienna is represented by the course entitled Conference Simulation, in which students learn to prepare for the real-life situation of an international conference. Starting with client communication, setting hourly/daily fees to working with a booth partner while doing retour, these are all addressed within the course. When asked about how relevant this was for their understanding of the future profession, most of the interviewees answered that they found it very helpful.

It was very authentic. We also talked about the less pleasant things, and the teacher even made an effort to simulate some unpleasant scenarios that could occur with the client so that we didn't get the impression that everything would always go smoothly. You have to explain certain things to the client and you sometimes have to fight for your rights and for your working conditions, and we talked about that too. (I-5: 200-204)

In Cluj, the ‘professional practice’ consisted in the writing of a practice journal that had to be completed every week for two semesters. This had to include any form of practice, including listening to podcasts, participating in mock conferences, or creating glossaries. This was regarded as useful for their academic progress by all interviewees, but not relevant for the actual understanding of the profession.

It's not bad to keep track of your progress with a diary, but at the same time, you can't record tremendous progress from one week to another, so basically what we did was we rephrased most of what we wrote the previous week for the current week. It didn't give me any insight into the future profession. (I-4: 156-159)

Another interviewee said that he appreciated the teacher's involvement when it came to the journal entries and the way he received feedback and recommendations, however, he also admitted to the journal not having a direct professional use.

Even though it was extra stress [to complete this journal], it was always something that paid off because you saw that it [the journal] was appreciated by the teacher and you always got guidance and help. Academically it helped me a lot, but professionally I can't say it helped me. (I-1: 199-202)

An interesting aspect is that despite not having an actual professional practice during their studies, all students acquired practical experience as part of the hidden curriculum. Both in Cluj and in Vienna professors would unofficially give students real-life interpreting assignments that they would supervise.

One of our teachers asked us to come to Bucharest for three days because she had an interpreting job for some trade unionists. It was simultaneous interpreting and although it was very abrupt, I learned how to interpret simultaneously by doing it. I probably did a very bad job based on the standards imposed by MEIC for simultaneous interpreting, but nobody complained and it was a very good experience. The same teacher took us to interpret with her on several occasions, sometimes for trade unionists, sometimes for certain organizations. (I-4: 73-81)

In Austria, while most assignments would not be paid, they would still represent an important exposure to clients on the job market.

I didn't have to do an internship. Our Romanian teacher took us to Wien Energie [the largest energy supplier in Austria] and some other places... and then we actually interpreted what was going on there. (I-6: 94-96)

Other than that, all interviewees mentioned taking up voluntary interpreting assignments as personal practice. In Vienna, most of these assignments were offered by AmberMed⁷, Neunerhaus⁸ and other organizations offering social and medical support for people with low-income. In Cluj, students would receive consecutive interpreting assignments

⁷ AmberMed is a team of volunteer doctors, assistants and interpreters who provide free social support and medical care to people without health insurance coverage (AmberMed 2022).

⁸ The social organization in Vienna called Neunerhaus provides medical treatment, housing, and counseling to help the homeless and those who are at danger of poverty live self-determined and dignified lives (Neunerhaus 2022).

form the French Institute⁹ for different events that needed bilateral interpreting. While these opportunities were not international conferences, they helped students train their consecutive interpreting skills, while introducing them to community interpreting, a field in which Romanian interpreters are demanded.

6.6. Completion Difficulty

Each institution has different assessment methods both for mid-term and final evaluations. In Vienna, students would be assessed in practical interpreting courses based on their performance throughout the semester. They would not be graded based on a final exam, but would receive a grade for each performance during the semester. The final grade would then represent the average of the student's activity in class, quality of interpreting and completion of additional tasks such as writing glossaries or preparing speeches. This method was appreciated by all interviewees who emphasized that "interpreting is a skill that is developed and that is dependent on one's momentary state of mind" (I-5: 178-180). Interviewee I-2 also described the fact that this kind of assessment method encouraged her to stay consistent in her training.

I think there is a big advantage to progressive evaluation, because it's not dependent on just one particular day when you might be out of shape. And if that happens, you can still catch-up next time. It somehow also motivates you to make sustainable progress, i.e., stay consistent in your training. Plus, a one-time examination would also mean that you could show up unprepared for other assignments because you thought "oh, I can just skip it this time, I've got an exam anyway" and that would be to your detriment, I think. (I-2: 196-202)

The students in Cluj, on the other hand, had an exam at the end of each semester for each interpreting mode. Each semester's final exam served as a means of gauging the students' proficiency in the four interpreting modes (consecutive without notes, consecutive with notes, simultaneous interpreting, and simultaneous interpreting with text). Starting with the second

⁹ Under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the French Institute in Cluj is a language and cultural action centre operating under the authority of the French Embassy in Romania (Institut Francais 2022).

semester, students who wanted to have the retour certification on their diploma had to take additional retour exams at the end of each semester. Most interviewees described these exams as difficult and stressful, and mentioned, as the students in Vienna, that their performance was dependent on their mood and state of mind.

That was another problem, the fact that you could be at your highest during the whole semester, but if you had a bad day at the end of the semester, you would fail that semester. And it happened, many times. I wasn't that affected by it because I wasn't doing well at consecutive with notes during the semester either so I failed my exam, but I had other colleagues who were doing really well all semester, but failed the exam. So, the end-of-semester exam is really important. It basically simulates the final exam. (I-1: 290-298)

While the reason behind end-of-term examinations could be setting expectations and simulating the final exams, all students reported having difficulties in passing these exams.

The final exam has the same structure as the semestrial exams. I had to pass consecutive with notes and simultaneous without text for all my working languages, and a simultaneous retour, which I failed. (I-3: 325-347)

In Cluj, the final exams consisted of four oral exams in consecutive and simultaneous mode from the foreign languages into Romanian. Optionally, and only after having passed the end-of-term retour exams, students could take a final retour exam and have it declared on their diploma. Failing the retour exam would however not influence the graduation.

The examination panel consisted of skilled interpreters, of whom at least two needed to have the candidate's A language in their language combination. One of these interpreters also needed to be a native speaker of the exam's target language. In accordance with EMCI guidelines, the panel also included at least one external examiner who had been invited from European Institutions, other international organizations, and other member-institutions of the EMCI Consortium.

I took the exams online, but the difficulty was very high because the speakers were interpreters for the European Commission. I think it's a requirement to have native

speakers hold the speeches for the final exam. And since I also did retour, for simultaneous I also had to interpret a speech held by a Romanian interpreter at the European Parliament. As far as I understood, the examination committee was formed by there of our professors plus a representative from another EMCI university and two representatives of the European Commission and the Parliament. (I-1: 302-313)

One of the issues regarding assessment outcomes was the difference in expectation level. I-4 mentioned being under the impression that feedback at the final exam was very different from the feedback received during the year. She attributed this to having a different examination board, but also to the fact that all four exams would take place in the same day, with a four-hour break in between.

During the year, feedback was given in a much more empirical and positive way than at the final exam, where it was very rigid and very thorough. This also has to do with the fact that it's a completely different committee at the exam than during the year and expectations are much higher. At the same time the exams are all taken on the same day, with a four-hour break between consecutive and simultaneous. (I-4: 239-243)

All the above-mentioned factors regarding assessment are significant for the completion difficulty of each program. While all students mentioned expecting a high degree of difficulty for the final exams, certain aspects posed additional challenges.

I found the final exams quite difficult. We practiced on a variety of difficulty levels during the courses, but I can say that the exam was hard. I wasn't surprised by this as I expected it to be hard. (I-1: 320-322)

In Cluj, the harsh examination committee and the fact that the students couldn't prepare terminologically beforehand posed a big challenge in achieving the degree. Out of the three interviewees, two graduated, but only one with retour into English. The third one failed her final exams in 2021 and was attempting to take them again in 2022.

When asked about their biggest challenge in pursuing this degree in Vienna, all three interviewees addressed the fact that having to interpret from their C language into German, their B language, was the hardest requirement they had to fulfill.

I wasn't surprised that I came to Austria and everything was in German (laughs), but that was definitely a challenge, especially when I think that I had to interpret from C to B. I think that was the biggest and least useful challenge. (I-5: 348-350)

Out of the two interviewees who attempted to take the final exams, only one managed to pass all six exams. The other one failed both consecutive and simultaneous interpreting from English into German and is currently at her fourth attempt to pass the exam. In order to enter a fourth attempt at an exam retake at the University of Vienna, a special examination committee needs to be formed to examine the student. If a student does not pass the fourth retake of an examination, they will be expelled from the program and from all programs in which the examination is compulsory. I-2 is the only student who did not yet attempt to take the final exams at the time of writing.

In more recent years, professors started warning students about choosing their specialization carefully because of the difficulty of the final exams in the two non-native languages, but for some students that represented a challenge.

I think the interpreting from C to B is the hardest thing. I wanted to do it to push myself on that part and I wasn't graded very harshly because the teachers took into account that English was my C language. (I-2: 262-264)

Another important aspect regarding program completion difficulty in Vienna is the Master's thesis. As mentioned in previous chapters, in Cluj-Napoca, students have to write a 30-page thesis on a subject related to interpreting and turn it in prior to taking the final exams. For the MEIC Master's thesis, students receive 10 ECTS credits.

In Vienna on the other hand, the Master's thesis needs to be an extensive study on a subject related to interpreting. According to the recommended curricular path, the student should start working on the Master's thesis after completing the final exams. The dissertation has to be around 100 pages long, without including the appendix. It is worth 26 credits in the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System and it must undergo a thorough examination starting with the approval of the thesis coordinator, a plagiarism check, a second opinion by another evaluating professor and a thesis defense.

7. Conclusions

This thesis aimed to compare the study of conference interpreting in the country of the native language and a foreign country, by taking a closer look at the hidden curriculum from the perspective of conference interpreting students having Romanian as their first language. By comparing different education traditions and concepts on the basis of two different Master's curricula, the following conclusions could be drawn.

Based on the experiences of six former and current students enrolled in MA programs in Vienna and Cluj-Napoca, the question of how studying conference interpreting outside the country of the native language shapes the experience of future professionals for the Romanian language has been answered to a certain extent. The six interviews also touched on the benefits and drawbacks of studying abroad in terms of honing one's ability to interpret both in one's mother tongue and in a second or third language. The reason for sharing these findings in an academic paper is well expressed by David Sawyer in his 2004 seminal work on curriculum in interpreter education:

“A case study of curriculum must also take into account those factors that are not codified in curriculum documents. The knowledge of an insider is required to fully evaluate those variables that are not apparent to the external observer and may nevertheless have an impact on curriculum outcomes. This information about the hidden curriculum should be thoroughly documented and exposed for the benefits of the external observer.” (Sawyer 2004: 43)

The strong points of the Master's program in Conference Interpreting in Vienna are the multiple language combinations that include Romanian and therefore make it the only University outside Romania where students can learn to interpret in their native language in combination with German. Also, the requirement to declare German as a B language and the exposure to the language while living in Austria encourage a faster progress than if the language was studied in a non-German speaking country. The University of Vienna also has very low tuition fees compared to other universities, which makes studying here accessible for more students. The program can be considered to have a seal of quality on account of the CIUTI membership. The professors at the University of Vienna have also been described as very dedicated and professional.

The Austrian educational system's flexibility enables students to plan their study schedules around their employment schedules in order to cover living expenses. However, as discussed in previous chapters, this also represents a disadvantage for the time needed to graduate. At the time of writing this thesis, none of the students in Vienna had graduated. Interviewee I-2 was in her fourth semester and had not yet attempted to take any of the final exams. When asked about an expected graduation date she answered that she would need two to four additional semesters. At the time of writing, interviewee I-5 was completing her master's thesis and was in her sixth semester. Her expected graduation date was the end of her seventh semester. Interviewee I-6 was in her twelfth semester and did not have a likely graduation date.

As discussed in previous chapters, the flexibility of the program is not mirrored in every aspect of the study. For example, a big problem is the discrepancy between the recommended curricular path and the reality in which certain courses can only be taken in specific semesters. Also, a significant lack of flexibility is represented by the fact that once students declare their specialization, they can no longer modify it. They must then take their final exams according to their specialization, even if some of the language combination requirements are not regarded as professional within the interpreting community. This is best illustrated by the requirement to pass two interpreting exams from one foreign language into another (C into B). All interviewees identified this as their greatest obstacle and as one of the biggest impediments to their graduation.

Because it gives students the freedom and autonomy to plan their time according to their own needs and gives them the opportunity to put together curricula based on their skills and abilities, interests, prior professional experience, and personal goals, flexibility is a crucial component of the academic experience of conference interpreting students (Hönig 1995). At the same time, the sequenced approach to curriculum, as in the case of the Master's in Cluj, helps ensure that instructional events are structured effectively and that the desired learning outcomes are attained. From this point of view, a balance between effectiveness and flexibility should be sought. Nevertheless, the fact that European citizens have the possibility to finance their studies via state-funded financial aid, no matter their nationality, represents a major advantage and encouragement for higher education at a larger scale.

As far as Vienna is concerned, the need to standardize admission requirements for students with identical educational backgrounds, the need to review curriculum documents and rethink inaccurate structures and also the need for transparency were all topics that came up in the three interviews. An important conclusion is that while studying the contents of the curriculum is crucial for understanding how the curriculum works, the responsibility for

creating clear expectations lies with the program administration and the university. While admission requirements are country-specific, they highlight two important aspects in curriculum design: national standards and expectations.

All interviewees responded in the affirmative when asked if they would enroll in the same program again, stating that they were satisfied with their progress but would make certain changes given the chance to do it all over again. Interviewee I-5 said that she would declare German as her A language given that it is possible and that it would not significantly affect her results on the final examinations. This way, she could add another B language to her official working languages. Interviewee I-6, however, said that she would choose the Dialog Interpreting specialization a second time around so that she would not have to take the final exams from C into B.

Both Master's curricula are focused on practical courses. Without taking into account the 10, respectively 26 ECTS credits that the two programs allocate to the Master's thesis, the number of ECTS credits assigned for theoretical courses in Cluj is 8, while in Vienna it is 16. The different models and approaches towards curriculum structure could be attributed, among other things, to the cultural and economic differences between Austria and Romania. As previously mentioned, the University of Vienna adopts a Y-forked curriculum model according to Arjona (1984) while Babeş-Bolyai University opts for a modified linear model. In terms of flexibility, this implies that, for the former, the modular structure of the program gives students the freedom to complete their courses in any order they choose without being subject to time limits. For the latter, on the other hand, the rigid curriculum structure does not allow much leeway, which, viewed from a more positive perspective, leads students to graduate in the recommended time frame.

According to a study conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), in Austria, only 24% of students graduate in the standard study period of three years for undergraduate studies and two years for graduate studies (Der Standard 2017). While the percentage of the population with higher education is increasing nationwide, according to a report released by the European Commission containing data on the education system of the Member States (Education and Training Monitor 2019), the number of students studying in Romania is decreasing, primarily because the population is declining.

With its fairly symmetrical course distribution in the four designated semesters, Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca suggests a format that gradually takes the student through all teaching contents. For this reason, the only possibility for the program to last longer than four semesters is if the student decides to “freeze” their year, which means that they cease

participating in any courses or exams for the duration of two semesters, with the possibility of resuming their studies after one year. Another possibility is if the student fails his or her final exams, in which case they would have to wait a whole year to retake the exams. The EMCI examination board comes together once during the final exam session every year. This is the only time when the student has the possibility to take the final exams in order to obtain the EMCI certificate.

The University of Vienna, on the other hand, offers students the freedom to choose how they structure their semesters, with very few prerequisites. For example, completion of the first module TR-01 is necessary before entering the sixth module and completion of the TR-KD-06 is necessary for entering the final stage. In regards to the final exams, students have four attempts at taking the final exams with exam sessions being organized three times each semester, during the examination weeks. This allows students to work part-time or full-time during their studies. Although from a financial perspective this may be advantageous, it most surely affects the time required to graduate.

In Cluj-Napoca, the biggest plus at the end of the study program is that students are experts in their native language, which is of the utmost importance for a professional interpreter working in the Romanian language. The EMCI seal of quality assures that the students are properly trained to work as conference interpreters at the European Institutions and this certification is valuable when applying for a position within the European Union.

While the classification of languages is not permanent, it must be respected for the duration of each program. With Romanian not being a widely spoken language, a strong retour would ultimately represent an advantage for any future interpreter. Interpreting into one's B language "is often a practical need in conference interpreting due to genuine market needs", as Bartłomiejczyk notes (2015: 109). This is particularly true in the European Union, where several of the more recent official languages, including Finnish, Hungarian, and Romanian, are extremely uncommon as B or C languages for interpreters. The question of how necessary and relevant interpreting from the C into the B language is, remains up for debate.

The structure of the final exams also reconfirms that the vocabulary and flexibility in one's mother tongue must reach very high levels at the end of the two years of study. For this reason, students in Cluj do not have to take final exams in any of their foreign working languages. The decision to take a retour exam and have it documented on the EMCI certificate is entirely up to the student; however, passing this exam is not required in order to successfully graduate. Studying in Romania is also fairly cheap compared to the rest of the world, and students even have the possibility to study for free, depending on their grades.

Compared to the University of Vienna, Babeş-Bolyai University has a more limited language offer. The lack of teaching staff and the low number of students in more recent years have also affected the language offer of the Master's program in Conference Interpreting. German and Italian are not currently offered as working languages, despite the fact that the department of Applied Modern Languages in Cluj is EMCI-accredited for English, French, Spanish, Italian, and German.

When it comes to curriculum implementation, students have reported facing big difficulties with the drastic separation of interpreting modes. The fact that consecutive interpreting is taught in the first year and not practiced enough after the second semester was reported as problematic and counterproductive by most interviewees. There has also been mixed feedback regarding the teaching staff at Babeş-Bolyai University. On the one hand, they were described as very competent, determined professors, some of whom went out of their way to facilitate online teaching during the Covid-19 pandemic. On the other hand, according to two out of three interviewees, there was intense competition among peers in their generation, which had a negative impact on the learning environment. They mentioned that oftentimes the professors would encourage these baneful dynamics in order to keep students motivated to improve. The results of this were not seen as something positive, with students mentioning having developed counter-productive attitudes towards their colleagues that affected the way they gave or received feedback. In this sense, Setton & Dawrant (2016b: 20) mention that “while occasional tears in class are usually cathartic and temporary, periods of demoralization cannot be ruled out.” Although personality clashes between students are difficult to prevent, there are two strategies that may be helpful: first, recognizing that effective interpreting requires teamwork and that it does not allow for any unnecessary distractions; and second, “to make sure students fully understand and accept the Group Practice guidelines, especially the part about how to give and accept feedback” (Setton & Dawrant, 2016b: 20). In Cluj-Napoca, students have reported having this kind of course and also finding it very useful for managing stress.

All students mentioned that they had a hard time passing the final exams due to the very high standards set by the evaluation board. Interviewee I-1 graduated and also passed the retour exam into English. Interviewee I-3 graduated without retour and is currently working as an in-house interpreter in Brussels. Interviewee I-4 failed the final exams and was attempting to retake them at the time of writing.

When asked if they would enroll in the same program again, all students firmly answered yes. Even in the case of interviewee I-4, who had not yet passed her final exams, the

response was that what she learned during her Master's in Cluj-Napoca was useful and relevant for her personal development.

When it comes to the organizational facets of becoming a professional interpreter, all students expressed a general lack of direction. They all believed that a structured course on how to enter the job market and how to work as a freelance interpreter would be a necessary and very useful part of the curriculum.

In regards to the hidden curriculum, some contextual factors and organizational structures influenced the outcomes of each program. In Cluj-Napoca, the practice of interpreting into the non-native language is not part of the official curriculum. Students do not train to do *retour* interpreting, but they can opt to take *retour* exams if they want to. Once they decide to do so, and if the professor deems it appropriate, they can give the student feedback and work together towards achieving their goal, however, most of the effort is individual and is not covered by the official curriculum.

In Vienna, interpreting into the B language is mandatory, but a student who does not have German as their native language must declare German as their B language. However, for some students, English is a stronger language than German. As part of the hidden curriculum, professors sometimes allow students to be evaluated based on an interpreting task from German into English, that is, from the B into the C language, during interpreting courses.

Another relevant aspect that is not mentioned in the official curriculum is class size. In Vienna, this can reach up to 30 students. However, if this occurs, the class is sometimes divided into two groups, and the students are either required to come every two weeks or practice for an hour and a half rather than the three hours that are intended. Either way, the amount of practice is considerably reduced compared to when the group is smaller. In Cluj-Napoca the situation seems to be the other way around. As part of the hidden curriculum, students come together and simulate conference situations in which they can practice with more speakers.

Last but not least, neither of the two programs require or offer professional practice opportunities. However, in Cluj, students reported having been offered paid simultaneous interpreting assignments by their professors who would supervise them in different settings. Apart from that, all students mentioned taking up voluntary assignments for different institutions, such as The French Institute of Cluj.

In Vienna, professors would also offer students opportunities to practice in real-life situations, some of which lead to paid jobs, as in the case of interviewee I-6 who worked as a paid interpreter for a medical center in Vienna during her studies. All students reported on

taking up voluntary assignments as community interpreters in order to practice consecutive interpreting outside university.

In conclusion, in order to understand how studying conference interpreting outside the country of the native language shapes the experience of future professionals for the Romanian language, all of the above discussed aspects need to be taken into account. It is undeniable that studying abroad can help interpreters become more proficient in their non-native language, but it is crucial to remember that an interpreter's biggest asset is a flawless command of their native language.

Through the analysis of curriculum documents and organizational structures for each university, this study has shown that curricula vary widely depending on the flexibility or rigidity of the national framework of each country. This also determines the expectations for each program. For example, in Cluj, students are expected to graduate within four semesters. This is not the case in Vienna. However, students here must be able to not only interpret into their foreign language, but also interpret from one foreign language into the other. This is not the case in Cluj, where students only interpret into their A language. Because of this, national traditions play a role in curriculum design, which should be regularly updated to meet current quality requirements and generational needs.

It is important to point out that while this study touches on a number of themes that frequently come up in both curricula, it is not exhaustive. While the number of students enrolled in conference interpreting Master's degrees with Romanian-A is low, this does not mean that the six interviews are an absolute representation of how each program is experienced. This applies especially for Babeş-Bolyai University where the sample was not even close to the full population. The significance of this study consists in its informative value regarding issues that have shown to improve or reduce the quality of the learning experience both in Vienna and Cluj-Napoca. It would take more research to ascertain the significance of these findings on a bigger scale and whether there is a big enough need for interpreters who speak Romanian-A to encourage it.

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Abstract

By examining the curriculum of two universities that provide Master's degrees in conference interpreting for students who have Romanian as their first working language, this thesis provides a broad perspective on the topic of training conference interpreters. The starting point is represented by historical accounts of the profession and the teaching of it, followed by an analysis of curriculum documents meant to help understand the structural similarities and differences between programs and their outcomes. Factors such as national frameworks and traditions are taken into account when analyzing both curricula. The personal motivation of the students, the program flexibility, working practices and assessment methods are also discussed as being part of the hidden curriculum. Furthermore, this thesis includes the in-depth description and analysis of six qualitative interviews with students who have studied or have graduated from one of the two Master's programs. The interviews sought to gauge students' opinion on, their expectations of and their feelings towards studying conference interpreting in the home country versus in a foreign country.

The findings suggest that a multitude of factors need to be taken into account in order to determine the advantages and disadvantages when it comes to language improvement and the learning of interpreting techniques in an academic environment. Nevertheless, the interpreting students in question show a certain dissatisfaction with the graduation requirements and their usefulness on the language market. The results of this paper point towards necessary changes in the implementation and curriculum design of both curricula.

Abstract (German)

Diese Arbeit bietet einen umfassenden Überblick über das Thema der Ausbildung von Konferenzdolmetschern, indem sie die Lehrpläne von zwei Universitäten untersucht, die Masterstudiengänge für Konferenzdolmetschen für Studenten mit Rumänisch als erster Arbeitssprache anbieten. Den Ausgangspunkt bilden historische Darstellungen des Berufs und seiner Vermittlung, gefolgt von einer Analyse der Lehrplanunterlagen, die helfen soll, die strukturellen Ähnlichkeiten und Unterschiede zwischen den Programmen und ihren Ergebnissen zu verstehen. Faktoren wie nationale Rahmenbedingungen und Traditionen werden bei der Analyse der beiden Lehrpläne berücksichtigt. Die persönliche Motivation der

Studierenden, die Flexibilität des Programms, die Arbeitspraktiken und die Bewertungsmethoden werden ebenfalls als Teil des „hidden curriculums“ diskutiert. Darüber hinaus umfasst diese Arbeit die ausführliche Beschreibung und Analyse von sechs qualitativen Interviews mit Studierenden, die einen der beiden Masterstudiengänge studiert oder absolviert haben. In den Interviews wurde versucht, ihre Meinung, ihre Erwartungen und ihre Gefühle in Bezug auf das Studium des Konferenzdolmetschens im Heimatland bzw. im Ausland zu ermitteln.

Die Ergebnisse deuten darauf hin, dass eine Vielzahl von Faktoren berücksichtigt werden muss, um die Vor- und Nachteile zu bestimmen, wenn es um die Verbesserung der Sprache und das Erlernen von Dolmetschtechniken in einem akademischen Umfeld geht. Dennoch scheinen die befragten Dolmetschstudierenden eine gewisse Unzufriedenheit mit den Abschlussanforderungen und ihrer Anwendbarkeit auf dem Sprachmarkt zu zeigen. Die Ergebnisse dieser Studie weisen auf notwendige Änderungen bei der Umsetzung und Gestaltung der Lehrpläne beider Studiengänge hin.