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The training of professional linguists in the United Kingdom

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THE TRAINING OF PROFESSIONAL LINGUISTS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

submitted by Stephen Peter Slade

for the degree of PhD

of the University of Bath

1990

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THE TRAINING OF PROFESSIONAL LINGUISTS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

SUMMARY

This research sets out to examine the process by which translators and interpreters from the United Kingdom are identified, trained and recruited into employment, with a view to determining the precise nature of supply and demand in the professional linguist sector.

Following a review of literature and research, focusing on the areas of training, employment and careers, the methods used to conduct the project are described. The nature and structure of the professions and possible routes into them are subsequently discussed, together with employers' recruitment practices. Attention is given to work on the personality profiles of interpreters and translators and its implications for training programmes.

The opportunities available for training are dealt with as follows: undergraduate courses containing elements of interpreting work or specialized translation, with particular reference to the BA in Languages (Interpreting and Translating) offered by Heriot-Watt University; the postgraduate courses at the Universities of Salford and Surrey, which are deemed not to meet the criterion of preparing students systematically for direct entry into one or other of the professions; specialist postgraduate courses which do fulfil

this requirement, namely those at the Universities of Bath, Bradford and Kent, and at the Polytechnic of Central London.

The results of four surveys are described, the first of members of the Institute of Translation and Interpreting, the second of staff translators at the EC Commission and the European Parliament in Luxembourg, the third of employers known to recruit United Kingdom graduates and the fourth dealing with the recruitment practices of the EC Commission in relation to interpreters.

Conclusions are presented under the headings of careers guidance, training at undergraduate level, selection procedures for specialist courses, design of specialist courses and implications for employers, this last section considering the scope for closer involvement between training courses and the users of language services.

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INTRODUCTION

0.1 Background

The professions of translating and interpreting represent one of the few career sectors available to modern languages graduates for which they are specifically qualified. While the numbers entering the professions each year may be low and constitute only a small proportion of the total numbers graduating, the rewards and status of the professional linguist can be attractively high.

The starting point of the research described in these pages was the recognition, through personal experience, that the process by which successful professional linguists from the United Kingdom were identified, trained and recruited into employment might be open to improvement, and had in any case never been analysed at length.

The advice given to aspiring translators and interpreters by careers counsellors often tends to emphasize the difficulty of entering the professions rather than indicating possible strategies for doing so. While it would obviously be unrealistic to suggest to all languages graduates that they should devote their efforts to breaking into a relatively exclusive field, it is regrettable that such advice may deter some talented individuals from persevering with their ambitions. There are several routes into the translating and interpreting professions, notably through a postgraduate course of specialized training. Gaining acceptance for a course of this kind may in itself be difficult, but at least the would-be

professional linguist is assessed on the basis of criteria designed to establish whether or not he has the necessary potential. As will be seen, these specialist courses are by no means homogeneous; apart from the fact that some offer training in both translation and interpreting while others concentrate on one discipline or the other, each is targeted on different sectors of the employment market and has evolved its selection processes, methodology and resources accordingly.

Perhaps, however, the career planning of the talented linguist should begin at an earlier stage, namely when applying for a place on a first degree course. Apart from the one course which specializes in translation and interpreting (at Heriot-Watt University, examined in detail in Chapter Four), both disciplines are to be found more and more as components in undergraduate programmes, either as teaching tools in the more vocationally oriented courses or as 'professional linguist' options. Such elements are no doubt an attraction to potential applicants, but it remains to be seen whether they have a significant contribution to make to preparing students for entry into either profession.

The institutions which offer specialist training programmes for translators and interpreters in the United Kingdom are only too well aware that the continued existence of their courses depends substantially on their record in producing students who succeed in finding employment shortly after completing their studies. They have therefore developed links with potential employers in an attempt to maximize the uptake of their students. This fact raises

a number of important issues, for example to what extent it may be possible to train students for work in a particular field or even for a particular employer, and how the employers themselves approach the question of recruitment. The training institutions' attitude to placing their students, and hence to the employment market in general, is not a collective stance but rather a set of individual reactions to developments in certain sectors of the market.

The picture, then, is one of separate areas of expertise existing without an overall framework - not for the purposes of coordination, because of the autonomous nature of the training institutions - but to enable potential professional linguists to make the right career choices, employers to recruit the right staff with the minimum expenditure of time and money, and the courses themselves to define their roles within the system.

0.2 Aims

Given this lack of an overview, and of any studies in this field relating specifically to the United Kingdom, the present research has been designed to establish the precise nature of supply and demand in the professional linguist sector. To this end, three main approaches have been adopted, examining firstly all aspects of the training opportunities available to students in the United Kingdom, secondly the career profiles of a broad cross-section of those active in the professions, and thirdly the requirements of employers and their recruitment practices. The exact scope of the

project is described in the following section, and details of the means used to execute it are contained in Chapter Two.

The findings of these studies are then analysed with a view to determining the implications for the training of professional linguists, particularly as regards:

- the guidance and information available to aspiring translators and interpreters;
- the criteria and methods applied in selection procedures for both training and employment;
- the value of specialist options within undergraduate courses;
- the structure and content of specialist courses;
- the involvement of employers in all aspects of the training process, including funding.

In more general terms, the aim of the project is to bring about a greater awareness of the different approaches that are possible within the training and recruitment process, given that there is little cross-fertilization between the bodies currently operating in the field.

0.3 Scope

Some reflections on the differences and similarities between the careers of translators and interpreters are contained in Chapter Three. The present research covers both professions and seeks to cast some light on the question of whether it is desirable, or

indeed possible, to offer courses which train students in both disciplines.

Although this study deals in part with vocationally oriented options or compulsory elements in undergraduate courses, it should be emphasized that the aim is not to examine these as teaching tools or as a means of comparing the value of different first degree courses. The point at issue here is rather to see whether such elements play a part in guiding potential professional linguists towards their future careers. The place of oral skills such as interpreting in a modern languages degree, as opposed to the usefulness of introducing students to interpreting from a career viewpoint, has already been the subject of considerable discussion, for example in Doble and Griffiths (1985).

As the title of this thesis implies, its scope is limited to training opportunities in the United Kingdom. Some UK nationals or UK-trained linguists do attend interpreting schools abroad, in particular ESIT in Paris, but for the majority such training is not feasible, if only on financial grounds. One of the specialist postgraduate courses under discussion, the interpreting course at the Polytechnic of Central London (PCL), caters for students with languages other than English as their mother tongue as well as home students. However, the many courses recently introduced specifically for overseas students, particularly from the Arab world, are excluded from this study. The same applies to courses dealing with subjects of very narrow professional interest such as literary translation and lexicography.

Other areas that were felt to lie outside the scope of the research were the work of court and 'community' interpreters, the latter specializing in the languages of ethnic minority groups. Similarly, the training of sign language interpreters was deemed to constitute an altogether separate field.

The initial data on training opportunities was collected in 1984, on the basis of material published by universities, polytechnics and colleges relating to the 1985-86 academic year. A second full survey was carried out in 1987, covering the programmes of courses which began in the autumn of that year and have, for the most part, not yet been completed. The information thus obtained on the undergraduate courses of greatest interest was updated continuously until the time of writing. While the descriptions of the various specialist courses take account of developments over the period from 1984 to 1990, particular attention was given to the courses which ended in 1987, with the relevant intake of students being monitored as far as possible through selection, training and subsequent recruitment.

The competitive nature of the undergraduate 'market' is such that most universities are reviewing their curricula annually. Keith (1990) deliberately refrains from giving precise details of the various courses available in translation, on the grounds that: 'All such courses are continually being rethought and improved and any such information would be inaccurate as soon as it was printed' (p. 167). There is no doubt that some aspects of the training opportunities described in this research will already have been

modified or superseded, and some changes may have been overlooked. The only possible approach, however, was to take not so much a snapshot as a delayed exposure, with some movement occurring in the foreground but the composition of the picture remaining clear.

In order to obtain the most up-to-date information possible on the state of the employment market, all the principal surveys were conducted at the very end of 1989 and in the first quarter of 1990. These involved the gathering of data from members of the Institute of Translation and Interpreting, translators working for institutions of the European Community and a wide variety of employers of professional linguists, covering all the main sectors in which UK-trained staff are likely to be recruited. Details of the methods used will be found in Chapter Two.

CHAPTER ONE

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND RESEARCH

1.1 Background

The disciplines of interpreting and translation have generated a huge volume of literature covering all aspects of these activities. Since the present research focuses on the training of professional linguists in the United Kingdom and their subsequent employment, literature on those areas is discussed in detail in sections 1.2 and 1.3 below. First, however, it seems necessary to make a number of general observations concerning the orientation of writing in the field.

A distinction which is immediately apparent from bibliographies of works on interpreting and translation is that between theory and practice. A vast literature exists on the theory of translation which belongs under the general heading of linguistics, with occasional attempts being made to apply conclusions based on theoretical analysis to the practical work of the translator. Similarly, there has been considerable interest on the part of psychologists in the mental processes involved in interpreting, particularly the simultaneous mode, with some attention being given to the implications for interpreter selection and training. While smaller in overall volume, there is also a

substantial body of writing on the practical side of the two activities, particularly translation. This often takes the form of descriptions of teaching programmes, problems encountered in training would-be interpreters and translators and the development of teaching materials. For the purposes of this study, however, which is primarily concerned with the situation in the United Kingdom, it is perhaps more helpful for two other distinctions to be drawn: firstly between literature produced by academics on the one hand and practitioners on the other, and secondly between that produced in and relevant to the UK and that originating in other language and institutional contexts.

The reason for drawing both these distinctions lies in the differences in the structure of interpreter and translator training in the United Kingdom by comparison with other countries. In France, Belgium, Switzerland, the Federal Republic of Germany and the countries of Eastern Europe, specialist schools or institutes have been established at which the staff are or have been active professional linguists. Such institutions have not been set up in the UK, with the result that overlapping of the academic and practitioner roles is much less common because of the piecemeal approach to training: those specialist courses which exist only represent a small part of the work of the departments which run them, and the staff involved thus tend not to be recruited specifically to teach interpreting or translation. Indeed, there is only one course in the whole country which specializes exclusively in training interpreters, the two-term programme offered by the Polytechnic of Central London; this goes to the opposite extreme,

with all the teaching being carried out by practising interpreters and no input from conventional academic staff.

While the literature emanating from institutions overseas certainly covers many aspects of the training of professional linguists and is discussed in section 1.2 below, it would be surprising if much attention were devoted therein to the somewhat fragmented system operating in the United Kingdom. Moreover, it is sometimes questionable to what extent material from abroad is relevant in the UK context, since apart from the fact that the language structures and requirements are not the same in overseas institutions, the latter are organized on a completely different basis.

The effect of the situation described above in terms of the literature produced and research work undertaken in the UK on interpreting and translation has been twofold. Firstly, the output of material from UK academic sources has been relatively low, and has leaned towards the more mainstream topics associated with linguistic theory rather than questions of training or professional practice. In recent years, there has been a noticeable increase in the attention given to interpreting as a language-teaching technique, but in the context of the development of undergraduate courses rather than as preparation for a professional career. Secondly, the gap left by the shortage of material from the academic world in the UK has to some extent been filled by contributions from the thriving professional milieu, in particular through journals such as 'Professional Translator and Interpreter', 'Language

Monthly' and 'The Linguist'. Not surprisingly, articles in these publications tend to focus on practical difficulties which confront working interpreters and translators, but there is also a growing interest in training for the professions.

It could therefore be said that the non-overlapping roles of academic and practitioner parallel the notable lack of cross-fertilization between the handful of institutions offering training in interpreting and translation in the UK. One way in which contacts have occurred between all concerned, however, has been through the organization of conferences at national level on different aspects of the two disciplines. For example, the series of four conferences held annually between 1984 and 1987 at the Universities of Bradford, Salford, Heriot-Watt and Aston dealt with various components of degree courses in modern languages, including interpreting and translation, and were attended by a number of professional linguists as well as interested academics. The collected proceedings of these conferences in fact account for a high proportion of the literature on the subject produced in the United Kingdom: half the references to UK-sourced material in the interpreting bibliography compiled by Altman (1987) are connected with the proceedings edited by Doble and Griffiths (1985) and Thomas and Towell (1985). Similarly, the annual conferences of the Institute of Translation and Interpreting have attracted participants from training institutions, employer organizations and the professional milieu, and have resulted in the publication of conference proceedings edited by Picken (1987, 1988 and 1990a) which cover a wide spectrum of interpreting and translation activities.

1.2 Training

1.2.1 General considerations

This section deals with material on training which relates to both interpreting and translation, with particular reference to training practices and opportunities in the United Kingdom. As throughout this chapter, the aim is not to provide an exhaustive summary of work in the field, but to indicate the topics which have been dealt with and to draw attention to material of particular relevance to the present study.

An inevitable drawback of descriptions of individual training programmes, or indeed of the training opportunities available in a particular country, is that they rapidly become out of date. Nevertheless, they are useful in providing a picture of developments at a given stage. As far as the United Kingdom is concerned, a brief general survey of translator and interpreter training which remains largely valid was produced by Coveney (1982). The conference paper by Griffiths (1987) reviews the training programmes available at slightly greater length, together with trends in undergraduate courses in modern languages, and addresses the question of whether the needs of the employers of linguists are being adequately met. The question of market needs is also tackled by Croft (1988a), who describes the postgraduate course in interpreting and translation offered by the University of Bath and takes up a number of broader issues concerning the constraints under which such courses are obliged to operate. Slade (1988) considers

the methods used to select students for specialist postgraduate training and their implications for students, courses and employers.

For the intending student, practical details of the specialist courses available are contained in handbooks such as the DOG 'Guide to postgraduate study, 1990' (1989a) and in material produced by careers offices. A good example of the latter is the leaflet entitled 'Survey of postgraduate courses in translating and interpreting 1986/87' compiled by the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS) (1988a). Although the authors rely for their data on institutions' responses to questionnaires, a fact which results in a number of gaps in the information provided, this leaflet remains a useful summary.

Descriptions can naturally also be found of training programmes in other countries. As regards the United States, for example, Weber (1984) provides a full account of translator and interpreter training at the Monterey Institute of International Studies and Davidson (1985) describes the courses offered by Georgetown University. Other works cover the situation in countries as a whole or in particular language areas. Thus Poulsen (1981) deals with the training of interpreters and translators in Denmark, while Zeumer and Stellbrink (1987) and Wotjak (1984) consider developments in German and Spanish-speaking countries respectively.

An example of a more general discussion of training issues is provided by the volume edited by Kapp (1984a), which is divided into three sections covering basic theory, training and professional

practice. In his opening article, Kapp draws attention to the misconceptions which exist on the part of prospective students regarding careers in interpreting and translation and introduces the volume as an attempt to supply them with clearer information. Some of the chapters which follow contain objective descriptions of various features of training programmes and the professions themselves, while others deal with more theoretical aspects of the activities involved and the role of certain elements of the curriculum.

The differences between teaching translation and teaching interpreting are the subject of a paper by Harris (1981), who begins by considering the points of divergence between the two professions before moving on to discuss teaching methods. The question of the extent to which the activities of interpreting and translation overlap and the desirability of preparing students to operate in both sectors are dealt with in Chapters Three, Five and Eight of the present study.

Lastly, a useful annotated bibliography on the didactics of translation and interpreting is contained in Roberts and Blais (1981), although it covers only publications written in French and English and some of the material is now rather dated. The bibliography is not subdivided, but each entry is classified according to its subject-matter and indexed on the basis of nine separate categories.

1.2.2 Translation

Apart from the general descriptions of translator training programmes referred to in the preceding section, it is hard to find more detailed material concerning specialist courses in the United Kingdom, as opposed to discussions of the role of translation in undergraduate syllabuses or literature on the theory of translation. Mention should be made, however, of the information contained in 'The Translator's Handbook' edited by Picken (1990b), which includes a useful practical summary by Keith of the training opportunities available in the UK and abroad.

In contrast, there are numerous accounts of developments in specialist training courses at institutions overseas and reflections on the philosophies which underlie them. Of particular interest is the paper by van den Broeck (1985), which considers the possibility of developing a model of translation teaching, at the same time pointing out the difficulties involved in defining and advancing levels of competence, whether in candidates applying for admission to training programmes or in students graduating from them. Nida (1979) gives an overview of the principles of training in translation, laying particular emphasis on the need for translators to appreciate the subtleties of their mother tongue.

A feature of the literature on training is the frequency with which problems associated with technical translation are discussed, together with the need for training programmes to be appropriately designed to cope with them. For example, a general discussion of

the opportunities for technical translators in the Federal Republic of Germany is provided by Beyer (1974), who describes at some length the procedures which should be applied for selecting individuals for training, the curriculum they should follow and the degree of specialization that should be acquired. Schumm (1975) considers the requirements of industrial undertakings which employ staff translators, concluding that it would be preferable for training to be consciously matched to these demands rather than leaving employers to recruit by means of potentially unsatisfactory tests. The papers by Rommel (1985 and 1987) describe the approaches adopted by the institute at which the author teaches in Zurich to prepare students for employment as technical translators. The first focuses on the new requirements for both in-house staff and freelances to be able to handle modern equipment for retrieving data and producing material in computerized form, the second on the need for training institutions to adapt the specialized subjects dealt with on their courses to the changing needs of the market. The in-service training of revisers in the translation department of a German government agency is described by Tazir (1987), who points out that translation schools, universities and polytechnics put no emphasis on revision work and the different processes it entails. Nevertheless, both Thaon (1984) and Payne (1987) draw attention to the importance of revision as a teaching method in translation courses.

The collection of papers delivered at the Tenth World Congress of the FIT, bearing the English title 'Translators and their position in society' and edited by Bühler (1985), contains two

contributions, by Komissarov and Wordsworth, on the role of translation theory in the training of professional translators. The former argues as follows in favour of the establishment of a theoretical basis for training programmes: 'A proper organization of translators' training is a challenge to the theory of translation. The theory should provide the teacher with understanding of what translation is and what makes a good translator, it should rationalize the choice of teaching materials and techniques. The teaching process is always a reflection, explicit or implicit, of a set of assumptions about the subject of study, even if the teacher might believe that his approach is purely empirical. It is an obvious advantage if these assumptions are made on the basis of solid theoretical knowledge, rather than concocted by rule of thumb' (p. 309). Komissarov proceeds to list various elements which should form part of any programme of training, without going so far, however, as to postulate a universally applicable format. Nevertheless, this paper demonstrates how translation theorists who have hitherto been principally concerned with the linguistic processes of translation may be turning their attention to what might be termed the theory of translation training. Wordsworth, on the other hand, in a discussion of training programmes in Canada, stresses the importance of including theoretical courses in linguistics, the history of translation and translation theory itself, on the grounds that students must be made aware of the need to reflect upon what they are doing and because such courses develop the student's critical faculties and analytical ability. The author goes on to explain the value of placing students temporarily in

commercial translation departments and of generally striking a balance between the elements of theory and practice.

Finally, much has been written on specific components of translator training programmes. The volume of papers edited by Delisle (1981) entitled 'L'enseignement de l'interprétation et de la traduction - de la théorie à la pédagogie' provides four such examples, all dealing with experiences in Canada: Bossé-Andrieu considers the problems of selecting candidates for admission to courses in translation; Roberts describes how traineeships during a training programme can be of particular benefit to students; Russell discusses the value of précis writing as an intellectual exercise which has much in common with translation; Flamand draws attention to the shortcomings of students in the use of their mother tongue and advocates exercises in drafting different types of text in their own language as a means of improving translation performance.

On the same lines, but in a German-speaking context, Petiocky (1980 and 1984) considers the impossibility of acquainting students with all the specialized areas of vocabulary and socio-cultural topics which are likely to confront them. He takes the view that the fields discussed in training programmes must be carefully chosen and dealt with in a way that teaches students the techniques of approaching unfamiliar subject areas. Picht (1985) reflects on how terminology as a discipline may best be integrated into translator training programmes so as to open up a wider spectrum of professional opportunity to the qualified translator. This calls to mind the recent initiative by the Dictionary Research Centre at the

University of Exeter to set up a European Lexicography Diploma in collaboration with a number of other European universities.

1.2.3 Interpreting

Bibliographies of interpreting are few and far between. In fact, the only comprehensive work in the field is that by Henry and Henry (1978), a wide-ranging collection which contains over 700 entries but is now to a large extent outdated. Perhaps the most useful recent publication is the bibliography by Altman (1987), which focuses on literature relevant to the teaching of interpreting. This contains 172 entries consisting of abstracts of the books and articles concerned, arranged alphabetically within seven main sections: reference works, the theory of interpreting, collective volumes, training in conference interpreting, interpreting as a language-teaching technique, non-conference interpreting and interpreting as a career. The most extensive of these is the section on training, with 84 entries covering teaching of the different modes of interpreting, curriculum design and aptitude tests. It includes much - though not all - of the material referred to below, the choice of which is intended to illustrate those aspects of training in interpreting that have attracted particular attention.

Conference interpreting differs from translation in that, as by far the younger profession, certain earlier contributions to its literature have achieved the status of standard works. The best

known of these is probably 'Le manuel de l'interprète' (translated as: 'The interpreter's handbook: how to become a conference interpreter') by Herbert (1952), which not only describes the role of the interpreter and the practicalities of the work involved, but also embarks on a discussion of the interpreting process which has undoubtedly served as a platform for subsequent investigations. At the forefront of such work have been representatives of the Ecole Supérieure d'Interprètes et de Traducteurs (ESIT) in Paris, who have applied the results of their analyses of the intellectual processes of interpreting to the methodology used for teaching students. In 'L'interprète dans les conférences internationales: problèmes de langage et de communication', Seleskovitch (1968) discusses in turn the phases in which the interpreter comprehends the incoming message, assimilates its meaning and re-expresses the original utterance in the target language, at the same time relating these tasks to practical considerations such as the context of the speech and specialized terminology. A second work by Seleskovitch which has come to be regarded as definitive, 'Langage, langues et mémoire: étude de la prise de notes en interprétation consécutive' (1975), is based on a controlled experiment in which a number of professional interpreters produced a consecutive rendering into French of two recorded speeches in English. The speeches and the interpreters' notes, target language versions and personal comments are analysed, with a view to confirming the theory that between the input and output phases, a process of assimilation takes place in the mind of the interpreter during which the concepts involved are temporarily dissociated from their linguistic vehicles. The notes taken by interpreters which assist in the retention of these concepts are

seen as a potential outward demonstration of the process. On similar lines, Lederer investigates the intellectual functions involved in simultaneous interpreting on an experimental basis in 'La traduction simultanée: expérience et théorie' (1981a).

Three papers in the collection edited by Delisle (1981) reflect the application of the research described above to teaching programmes. In 'L'enseignement de l'interprétation', Seleskovitch refers back in the following terms to her previous analyses: 'Interpréter, ce n'est pas seulement comprendre des mots, mais comprendre à travers les mots le vouloir dire de celui qui parle, c'est ensuite l'exprimer de façon immédiatement intelligible' (p. 25). The author proceeds to set out a graduated training programme in which much emphasis is placed on this notion of understanding and the usefulness of practice in consecutive interpreting for its development: 'La simultanée n'a de chance d'être faite correctement que si le processus de la compréhension du sens puis d'une expression commandée par le sens a été clairement compris et acquis dans des exercices qui dissocient compréhension et restitution, c'est-à-dire dans des exercices de consécutive. On met facilement le doigt sur les erreurs méthodologiques d'une mauvaise consécutive, les étudiants peuvent être amenés à les corriger peu à peu. Il est beaucoup plus difficile de démonter une simultanée de mauvaise qualité' (p. 38).

Lederer endorses this view in her paper 'La pédagogie de la traduction simultanée', which describes the various intellectual and linguistic skills that students need to be taught in order to master

simultaneous interpretation. A particular problem is the tendency for interpreters to translate literally word-for-word rather than conveying the underlying meaning of the original speech. The author goes on to discuss teaching methods, recommending that students should progress gradually from material not prepared by the speaker in advance ('discours libres') to the interpretation of more formal speeches delivered on the basis of written texts. Much the same line is taken by Déjean le Féal in her paper entitled 'L'enseignement des méthodes d'interprétation', which covers the technique of on-sight translation besides those of consecutive and simultaneous interpreting. The different phases of the interpreting process are again identified and their implications for training courses discussed. In conclusion, the author emphasizes that methodology and practical work need to be integrated within training programmes, so that students have a clear understanding of the tasks they are endeavouring to perform and can more readily appreciate the reasons for any shortcomings.

The principles enunciated in the three papers described above seem seldom to have been contested since their original formulation and have indeed been reiterated by other authors in different language contexts, for example Willett (1984). An apparent consensus exists among the leading European and North American schools as regards the foundations of training programmes, if not on details of the curriculum. When a dissenting voice is heard, it tends to be from outside the circle of established training institutions and rather from within the profession itself. In Robichaud (1984), for example, an author responsible for

introductory courses in interpreting at the University of Ottawa but with long professional experience takes issue with the view that the teaching of simultaneous interpreting should always be based on that of consecutive. He prefers to use extempore and on-sight translation as initial teaching methods, and casts doubt on the idea that a single paradigm for training interpreters could be devised because of the different intellectual qualities and linguistic capabilities of students.

Turning to more specific aspects of interpreter training, Namy (1978) reflects on the need for students to be encouraged to develop an awareness of the different contexts in which they are to operate. He describes the aim of his paper as being 'to show that good simultaneous interpreting cannot rely on words alone. A great deal more is involved: knowledge of the speaker's cultural background, intentions and motivations; knowledge of the subject-matter of the conference; knowledge of the listeners' cultural background, intentions and motivations, to name but a few elements' (p. 25). Namy thus emphasizes the importance of the interpreter being versatile enough to adopt an approach to suit a particular type of meeting, the various speakers and their audience.

A highly practical review of methods used for selecting and training conference interpreters is provided by Keiser (1978), who begins by setting out four assumptions on which, in his view, all training practices should be based. These are as follows: that courses must be highly selective and provide training that approximates as closely as possible to actual work; that students

must have a sufficiently high level of previous education and training; that interpreting courses are not language courses; that the subject should be taught exclusively by conference interpreters. Keiser goes on to describe the kind of aptitude tests which should be applied during selection procedures, specifically excluding any involving written translation. Those recommended are interviews in all a candidate's languages, an improvised short speech in the mother tongue, an oral comprehension test and an on-sight translation. Performance can only be assessed by a panel of professional conference interpreters. Lastly, the curriculum of a typical postgraduate interpreting school is described, including courses in public speaking, documentation and professional practice as well as those covering the principal interpreting modes. Keiser concludes that: 'The secret of interpreter training, provided the initial selection has been accurate, lies in practice, in the living example chosen from everyday work situations, explained, exercised, corrected, repeated. It is all rather simple, but takes a lot of preparation time for the teacher. It can only work, however, if the teacher knows what he is talking about, if he has lived it himself, if he can convey to the student how imperative it is not to get locked into systems, clichés and stereotypes, but to practise maximum flexibility in adapting to changing language and changing conference situations' (p. 24).

Further attention is given to the screening of potential interpreters by Sofr (1976), who proposes the designing of a standardized aptitude test, Bowen and Bowen (1983) and Moser-Mercer (1985), who describes the selection procedures applied at the

Monterey Institute of Foreign Studies. A psychometric approach to selecting trainee conference interpreters is discussed in Gerver, Longley, Long and Lambert (1984), who devised a series of tests for candidates for admission to the postgraduate interpreting course at the Polytechnic of Central London. These are dealt with in detail in the context of the course as a whole in section 5.4 below. The difficulties of assessing interpreting performance in general are considered by Wesemaël (1984), who draws attention to the risks inherent in forming a judgement on the basis of a single hearing and advocates recording simultaneous renderings and assessing them in segments.

A textbook often referred to as a standard work on note-taking for consecutive interpreting is that by Rozan (1956), which lays down seven principles for representing and associating ideas on paper and proposes the use of a limited number of symbols. Students are strongly advised to concentrate on analysing what they hear, however, rather than devoting their attention to an elaborate system of shorthand. Rozan's method is discussed from the point of view of teaching consecutive interpreting in Henderson (1976). A warning against over-emphasizing the importance of taking notes is given by Thiéry (1981), who points out that the primary objective must always be to deliver a satisfactory interpretation rather than to note down the contents of the original speech. He concludes that students should be allowed to develop their own individual methods of note-taking, with teachers concentrating on the improvement of listening skills and the quality of students' delivery.

Relatively little attention has been paid to the use of different types of technical equipment for training conference interpreters, perhaps because those writing from major interpreting schools simply assume that the hardware will always be available to simulate a working environment. However, Westman and Chapman (1977) discuss ways in which a conventional language laboratory can be used to provide an adequate means of training in simultaneous interpretation. Henderson (1975) recognizes the shortcomings of language laboratories when used for this purpose, but considers other forms of interpreting practice for which the facilities are more suitable.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the conference proceedings edited by Doble and Griffiths (1985) and Thomas and Towell (1985) reflect a growing interest on the part of United Kingdom universities and polytechnics in the use of interpreting as a language-teaching technique and hence its inclusion in undergraduate courses. The former collection contains a paper by Pollock entitled 'Towards a pedagogic theory of interpreting' which makes the critical distinction between using interpreting as a means of enhancing undergraduates' overall linguistic capabilities and training postgraduates to become professional interpreters. While a consensus on this distinction seems to have emerged from the conferences in question, it nevertheless tends to become blurred when institutions describe the interpreting components of undergraduate courses to potential applicants, as indicated in Chapter Four of this study.

Many of the items referred to above contain descriptions of elements of particular training courses in different parts of the world, without giving a complete account of the programme concerned. Such accounts naturally exist, however, and in this context mention should be made of the early work by Paneth (1957), which describes the experimental training course run at Germersheim in 1954 and goes on to advocate the setting up of an 'Institute for Living Languages' in the United Kingdom as a training centre outside the existing higher education system. Somewhat more recently, the programme of interpreter training offered by the Monterey Institute of Foreign Studies has been described by Arjona (1978), and that available at the University of Vienna by Petioky (1983). As far as the United Kingdom is concerned, Longley (1978) gives an account of the postgraduate interpreting course at PCL, while Taylor (1988) discusses the simultaneous interpreting component of the specialist course at the University of Bath, on the basis of responses to a questionnaire distributed to former students. The six-month course offered by the EC Commission in Brussels forms the basis of a study by Seleskovitch and Lederer (1989), who elaborate a comprehensive teaching methodology, concluding that teachers must be able to practise what they preach and that standards for interpreting diplomas should be harmonized.

Finally, the Association Internationale des Interprètes de Conférence (AIIC) has published a 'Guide to establishments offering courses in conference interpretation' (1984) containing details of courses in 21 countries throughout the world, though excluding those of Eastern Europe. Entries in the guide are standardized within a

framework of data covering such points as entrance tests, language combinations available, teaching staff, examinations and costs, with AIIC recommendations set out under each heading to provide a yardstick for assessing each course. An introduction to the guide explains the thinking behind these recommendations, which are sometimes open to charges of partiality, for example the insistence that teaching staff and examiners should, as far as possible, be members of AIIC. Only seven courses in the world carry AIIC's seal of approval, one of which is that offered by PCL. The introduction also enumerates the qualities needed by would-be conference interpreters, and these are discussed in Chapter Three below.

1.3 Employment and careers

This section covers the literature on career prospects in translation and interpreting and on the relationship between training and employment, with particular reference to the United Kingdom. Material specifically describing the professions and considering the type of person who may be suited to them is dealt with in Chapter Three.

A general review of careers in both disciplines which remains of interest is provided by Hendry in 'Your future in translating and interpreting' (1969), though the descriptions of training opportunities are naturally well out of date and the author's comments are most relevant for readers in North America. More specific data on the employment prospects for graduates of

university institutes for translators and interpreters are contained in an article by Sager (1975), who acknowledges at the outset the problems facing the researcher in this field: 'It is extremely difficult to give a clear picture of the career structure of graduates of the various university schools preparing translators and interpreters since no institution has kept a consistent and complete record of the employment of their graduates' (p. 2). Nevertheless, he proceeds to analyse the careers of graduates from Germersheim, ESIT and Geneva and draws a number of conclusions concerning the type of courses offered by such institutions and the way in which they prepare their students for employment as professional linguists. Sager's principal finding is that the pattern of training should be changed: 'Translator and interpreter training should become postgraduate courses for students who have acquired a profound knowledge of one or two foreign languages, with varying degrees of emphasis according to choice' (p. 7). Such a course 'would principally consist of the theory and technique of the linguistic skill of translating or interpreting, supplemented by specialization according to the area of employment intended, e.g. industry, economics, government or international organizations' (p. 8). Prospective translators and interpreters should first take a broadly based undergraduate course in language studies; a particular advantage of this system would be to avoid the simultaneous teaching of a language and the technique of translation or interpreting. It is interesting to reflect that while the courses studied by Sager have to a large extent retained the structure which he criticizes, those in the United Kingdom in many respects embody his suggestions.

Careers in translation alone are so diverse that writing on the subject has tended to concentrate on the opportunities available in particular sectors or organizations, although 'The Translator's Handbook', edited by Picken (1990b), contains much general information and advice. In McCluskey (1987), for example, a senior member of the English translation staff at the EC Commission discusses the problems encountered by language graduates on entering his department and points to the implications for translator training. Several aspects of professional work are seen as hard to duplicate on training programmes, such as the need for consistency between successive versions of a text, rapid switches from one piece of translation to another and the development of an awareness of the style acceptable for different types of document. On recruitment, McCluskey states that only between 5 and 10% of candidates for translation posts at the Commission meet the necessary standard: while many fail because of inadequate knowledge of the source languages and others display a lack of general knowledge, the majority of applicants are unsuccessful because of the poor quality of their English.

Luther (1988) describes the recruitment methods and career opportunities available in the United Nations system, giving the results of a survey conducted by the author among nine UN specialized agencies. He points out that the career path of the language specialist is characterized by its low ceiling and that opportunities for transfer into other functions are restricted, but indicates that the demand for translators will remain steady.

Turning to a different sector, Anderson (1988) considers the nature of specialist translation in industry and commerce from the point of view of both translator and employer, remarking that 'translators seem on the whole to enter their profession more by chance than as part of a well-considered plan' (p. 203). He warns against placing too much emphasis on linguistic ability and examination results when recruiting translators, it being necessary to consider other specialist qualifications and experience, as well as attitude and personality. Anderson also devotes attention to the arguments for and against using freelances or agencies as opposed to staff translators, concluding that there is likely to be a growth in the number of translators employed on a full-time basis by agencies themselves, since in an increasingly competitive market such an arrangement can provide distinct advantages in terms of cost, quality and speed of response. No doubt because of its disparate nature, the freelance world does not seem to have been the subject of general reviews, though personal experiences have been described by individual translators such as Weeks (1988). An interesting account of the employer's attitude to freelances is given by Ratcliffe (1990), who provides some useful advice for newcomers to the profession.

Little material is available on career prospects for interpreters, since the profession is a small one and such openings that exist are initially for freelances rather than full-time staff. Longley's book entitled 'Conference Interpreting' (1968) appears to remain the only attempt at a comprehensive English-language guide to the profession and prospects for entering it, although its

assessment of the employment market and many of its recommendations on training are now inevitably out of date. Nevertheless, the sections concerning the use of interpreting, the job itself, the qualities required and the practical difficulties likely to be encountered are still relevant, despite the author's occasional idiosyncrasies such as her view that interpreting is a career for women rather than men. A particularly attractive feature of Longley's book is its positive attitude concerning entry to the profession: while being entirely realistic about the difficulty of the job itself and the limited opportunities for employment, the author indicates that the right person who adopts the right approach can succeed in becoming a professional interpreter. Interpreting is all too often presented as an exclusive occupation, almost a closed shop, open to a tiny number of highly skilled specialists. Such an impression is given by Pilley (1972) who, rather than offering constructive advice on career planning, emphasizes how few would-be interpreters go on to achieve their ambitions and criticizes interpreter schools in Europe for taking on too many students. Needless to say, the situation on which both authors based their comments has since changed radically, following the accession of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland to the European Community in 1973.

Considerable attention has been given in the higher education sector in the United Kingdom to the career prospects of language graduates in general, both in terms of providing guidance for students and designing courses appropriately. While careers in translation and interpreting have been covered by such work, it is

often difficult to establish from statistics whether graduates have undertaken further specialist training before moving into employment. For example, the wealth of statistics and information on languages in education contained in the volume edited by Printon (1986) yields relevant data only after careful analysis.

'Careers using languages' by Steadman (1982) includes brief descriptions of translation and interpreting as professions and offers guidance on suitable first degree courses and specialist postgraduate training. Here too, however, a realistic attitude towards the difficulty of entering either field all too easily becomes a willingness to deter: 'Anyone advising a person interested in these careers has to play devil's advocate in order to emphasize the very limited openings in these fields and to try to steer the budding linguist towards some other area of employment' (p. 54).

Research has been carried out both by monitoring the initial job destinations of language graduates and by surveying employers to determine the qualities they are seeking in recruits. An example of the former technique is 'Using languages in a career' by Hantrais (1985), which sets out the results of a study tracking the career paths of students who graduated from language degree courses at Aston University between 1977 and 1984. However, no particular conclusions are drawn from the fact that the proportion of graduates employed as professional linguists (3% of those with degrees in two languages, 2% of those with degrees combining a language with another subject) is slightly higher than the national average.

Employers' requirements are considered in some detail in the volume edited by Hagen (1988), which consists of a number of regional surveys of language needs in industry, followed by a series of chapters on companies' language training programmes. Apart from the article on specialized translation by Anderson referred to above, the emphasis is on the extent of foreign language contacts in business activity and the amount of in-house expertise available, rather than on the use of professional language services. There is little discussion of the recruitment of specialist translators or interpreters, attention being focused on the combination of language skills with knowledge of other fields.

Both approaches to the subject are covered in the collection of papers edited by Hantrais (1988) entitled 'Higher education for international careers'. This deals with research on the career paths of language graduates, employment opportunities in international settings and the needs of major employers such as Courtaulds and GKN. Again, one of the principal topics discussed is how language courses might be adapted to meet the needs of graduates seeking to work in other specialized fields, especially in an international context.

Finally, there are a number of publications offering guidance to students on careers using languages, all of which make reference to the fields of interpreting and translation. Apart from the general compendia such as 'Graduate Employment and Training 1990', published by the Careers Advisory and Research Centre (CRAC) (1989), and 'Graduate Opportunities' (GO) (1989), two useful guides are the

booklet entitled 'Your degree in modern languages' published by AGCAS (1988b) and the DOG guide to 'Graduate careers in creative media and languages' (1989b). Mention should also be made of the information pack on languages and careers edited by King and Thomas (1989), which is intended primarily for students choosing an undergraduate course but looks forward to the type of careers for which they might expect to be prepared. The quality of advice provided is somewhat open to question, however, since the fact-sheet on applied languages, interpreting and translating fails to mention the courses at the Universities of Aston, Salford, Bath and Bradford and at Oxford Polytechnic which would surely be of relevance, and refers only to the postgraduate courses at PCL as a means of obtaining specialist training after graduation.

CHAPTER TWO

APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

As already described, the present project falls into two main parts, an analysis of training opportunities and a survey of the employment market. This latter study was deliberately left until the later stages of the period of research in order to obtain the most recent picture possible of market conditions for inclusion in this thesis.

The project thus began with a comprehensive study of the training opportunities available at higher education institutions in the United Kingdom, based in the first instance on the material published by those institutions and available to intending students, i.e. prospectuses and similar literature which describe in general terms the type of training offered, the qualifications required of applicants and the sort of career that might be in prospect for students successfully completing the course.

A list was therefore compiled of those institutions offering at least one foreign language at degree level, based on the information contained in *The Student Book* (ed. Boehm et al., 1983 to 1990). The 92 institutions thus identified were then sent a letter requesting their current undergraduate and postgraduate prospectuses covering the field of modern languages, together with any other

material available on particular courses or options. Replies were received from 89 of the institutions; the other three were subsequently dealt with using material supplied to university careers offices. All the literature thus obtained was then analysed to identify:

- the specialist courses available at both undergraduate and postgraduate level;
- the courses in which interpreting and/or specialized translation were offered either as options or as an integral part of the syllabus;
- the courses in which exercises involving interpreting and/or specialized translation formed part of the basic language-teaching programme;
- the institutions which offered special facilities for interpreting or resources for translation work;
- the institutions which made particular mention of interpreting and translation as potential careers for their students;
- the institutions which listed interpreting and/or translation among the topics in which they had a current research interest;
- the institutions which offered a wide range of languages, or unusual languages or language combinations, which might equip a linguist for professional work.

Having been identified, the relevant departments were then contacted by letter or telephone for more detailed information. The approach adopted was that of the potential applicant seeking to discover which course would best suit his needs as a would-be professional linguist. On the basis of the information obtained in

this way, a short-list was drawn up of institutions to which a personal visit was essential in order to interview appropriate members of staff. Having ascertained from contacts at the University of Bath which channels would be most likely to bring about a positive response, letters were sent to academic staff at the target institutions in early 1985 giving details of the project and asking for their cooperation. Dates for visits were suggested and a provisional programme drawn up for a tour of the relevant departments in February and March.

The initial response from the individuals contacted could be described as one of cautious interest. Being involved in this particular field, they could not fail to be interested by a project which seemed likely to generate a good deal of potentially useful information and to shed light on a number of questions; the request for an interview could therefore hardly be refused. As became clear in the course of this first round of visits, however, there were other factors involved which caused this professional interest to be tempered with a degree of coolness.

To understand this reaction it is necessary to consider the basis on which the specialist postgraduate courses are run. The students attending such courses are, for the most part, supported by bursaries from the Department of Education and Science (DES) which cover tuition fees and maintenance. Applicants selected by course organizers are nominated for these awards up to a ceiling number fixed by the DES each year. While candidates from Scotland and Northern Ireland may be able to obtain funding from those areas'

education departments and the occasional student may be willing to finance himself or be eligible for some other form of grant (e.g. MSC retraining), the size of each course is effectively determined by the number of bursaries allocated to it. The decision-making process whereby this number is established is far from transparent; however, one of the crucial elements, as perceived by the training institutions, is the evidence supplied by them to the DES of their students' records in securing employment. These data are forwarded to the DES towards the end of the calendar year in which each course is completed. Any factor which might sway the judgement of the officials at the DES in allocating bursaries and thus affect the future of a course assumes the utmost importance.

In an attempt to clarify the situation, information was requested from the DES regarding the criteria applied for the allocation of bursaries, but none was initially forthcoming. An approach was therefore made in December 1989 through the author's Member of Parliament, who was at the time a Cabinet Minister. This produced a response in the form of a letter from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the DES containing a general statement of departmental policy on bursaries, together with statistics on the numbers allocated to various institutions in recent years and information on the destinations of DES-funded finishers for the year 1986-87. These details are incorporated in the relevant sections of Chapter Five; a copy of the letter will be found in Appendix VI.

Those responsible for organizing the training courses in question are therefore very sensitive to the idea of comparisons

being drawn between themselves and similar courses elsewhere, which become rivals largely for reasons of finance. Any outsider - but especially one operating under the auspices of one of these 'rival' institutions - is therefore liable to be treated with some circumspection in the first instance. This sensitivity is heightened by the suspicion that ideas or practices may be poached or, more crudely, that details of procedures such as the admission tests might even be leaked to potential candidates. A further complication is the existence of personal rivalry or animosity between the academic staff concerned. One course leader prefaced his comments when interviewed with the remark that the person supervising the research was no friend of his.

The fact that such obstacles to the researcher need to be overcome perhaps illustrates why there is so little exchange of ideas between the institutions involved. Despite the attendance of their representatives at conferences where some cross-fertilization might occur, the academic staff remain largely unaware of exactly what is going on in the context of parallel courses elsewhere, simply retaining the notion that such courses are rivals seeking the same top-class applicants or pursuing the same job vacancies at the end of the year, something which the present survey will show not to be the case.

The first task was therefore to win the confidence of academic staff in myself and my project, to exploit their natural curiosity and desire to benefit from any findings which might emerge and to reassure them that no value judgements would be implied and that any

material they wished would be kept confidential. My status as a practising professional translator employed by an international organization no doubt helped in this process, not least because the institutions saw a possibility of deriving some benefit from my interest.

It proved possible to establish a most satisfactory working relationship with all but one of the specialist institutions, the exception being the University of Kent. Following my initial visit there in early 1985, requests for further information were somewhat brusquely declined and subsequent letters went unanswered. Fortunately, most of the details required had been obtained on that first visit, and more material was later made available by an individual member of staff. Nevertheless, the data supplied by Kent remain slightly less extensive than those from the other institutions.

The constraints described above not only conditioned the approach which it was necessary to adopt when researching the area in question, but also affect significantly the presentation of the information gathered in these pages. It is not possible, for example, to annex samples of test pieces for translation unless they have been cleared by the institution which used them. The further restrictions imposed by the methods used to gather the information will be described in due course.

To resume the sequence of events, the visits in 1985 took in all the specialist institutions, including Salford and Heriot-Watt

Universities. In each case, the same framework of questions, tailored to the characteristics of each course, was put to the staff being interviewed. Their answers were for the most part recorded on tape, supplemented by handwritten notes. A tape of one such interview, with a Course Leader at PCL responsible for interpreter training, has been included in Appendix X (for examination purposes only). On the basis of the data collected, a smaller group of institutions was defined for more detailed investigation, consisting of the postgraduate courses at PCL and the Universities of Bath, Bradford and Kent, together with the undergraduate course at Heriot-Watt. It was decided to focus on the course year 1986-87 for the purposes of the study and to attempt to follow the entire training process through from initial application and selection to final assessment and job destination. In the case of Heriot-Watt, the final-year students completing their course at the same time were to be treated in a similar way, though naturally without the selection element.

A second series of visits was therefore arranged to coincide with the departments' testing days. These took place between March and June 1986, following useful contacts with many of the academic staff concerned at the conference on Translation in the Modern Languages Degree at Heriot-Watt University in January 1986. It proved possible to witness virtually all the test procedures involved at first hand and even in some instances to participate in interviews. Data were again collected on tape and in the form of notes, with written and telephone enquiries being made to clarify specific points between visits.

The third and last set of visits took place during the 1986-87 academic year and was intended as a means of updating the information collected on courses to take account of the latest developments and of making contact with the students with a view to securing their assistance in providing feedback at the end of the course. A visit to PCL was made in November 1986, followed by interviews at Bradford, Heriot-Watt, Kent and Bath in February 1987. Subsequent contact was by post and telephone, and through the occasional visit to Luxembourg by teaching staff supervising trainees.

Towards the end of the courses in question, and with the permission of the course authorities, questionnaires were sent out for distribution to the students completing their studies (see Appendix V). The response to these was variable, perhaps due to the practical difficulties of distribution and collection, but some results were nevertheless of interest and are described in Chapter Five. Similarly uneven data were obtained regarding students' initial job destinations: while some institutions, such as the University of Bradford, were able to provide full details of their students' subsequent employment, others such as PCL were either unwilling or unable to produce any information at all. The data on student destinations elicited from the DES to a large extent remedied these shortcomings, however.

Lastly, follow-up surveys of all higher education institutions were made in February/March 1987 and mid-1989, on the same lines as the initial survey in 1984, to see what developments had occurred at

institutions not previously investigated in depth. In the light of the results, further enquiries were made of a number of departments, including a visit to the University of Surrey in November 1989. The findings are incorporated in Chapter Four of this thesis dealing with the training opportunities available.

Some comment is necessary at this stage on the manner in which much of the data collected during the process described above has been presented. Firstly, since the bulk of material concerning the courses was obtained through interviews and conversations, there can be little reference to bibliographical sources. The literature which provided a starting point for identifying the relevant courses, i.e. prospectuses and other published information, is often no more than a superficial summary of what is available. Secondly, it was generally impossible to talk to a single individual who was responsible for every aspect of a particular course and who could therefore provide an authoritative departmental viewpoint that might be quoted. Responsibilities are evidently shared between a team of staff who may and do have different attitudes towards the course in general or their own contribution to it. Thirdly, as a consequence of the previous point, not all the staff interviewed wished their statements to be attributed to them personally in this thesis.

The net result of these considerations is that very little of the information gathered has been attributed to named individuals. It is therefore necessary to state clearly that what may appear to be generalizations or comments made without supporting references or documentation are in every case views expressed by a person directly

involved in the matter under discussion. It is indicated in the text how much weight it is considered should be attached to such statements and also which analyses are my own. This approach, though perhaps regrettable from the point of view of academic exactitude, proved to be the only one that fully allowed for the sensitivity of the training institutions which has been described above.

The survey of training opportunities naturally overlapped with that of the employment market to some extent. It seemed logical to take as a point of departure the training institutions' own view of the employment prospects of their students, and therefore to begin with an investigation of the advice offered to aspiring professional linguists. Careers offices supplied useful background information, providing lists of potential employers and statistics on job destinations of modern languages graduates in general. For more detailed analysis of developments in the market for translators and interpreters, however, it was again necessary to rely on data from the specialist courses. The main difficulty here proved to be that some of the departments in question did not systematically keep track of their students after recording their initial job destinations within six months of the end of the course. Needless to say, all were only too pleased to list the organizations which had recruited their students in the past, since such details could only reflect credit on themselves, but in some cases statistics such as the proportion of former students currently working as professional linguists had simply not been compiled.

It was therefore decided to approach consideration of the employment market in two ways, firstly by surveying as broad a cross-section as possible of those working as professional linguists, and secondly by conducting a similar exercise in relation to employers.

Two surveys of professional linguists in employment were carried out, the results of which are contained in Chapter Six. The first covered the membership of the Institute of Translation and Interpreting (ITI), a body founded in the United Kingdom in 1986 to represent the interests of both professions. A questionnaire was sent out with the ITI Bulletin of December 1989, which was received by 1,367 members and subscribers, representing an effective target group of 1,134 individuals holding one of the grades of membership open to practising linguists. The questionnaire, an example of which may be found in Appendix I, was intended to produce information on respondents' personal background, education and training, current activity and route into the profession. The advantages of using the membership of the ITI as a sample were threefold. Firstly, efficient delivery of the questionnaire to a large number of individuals was guaranteed. Secondly, the membership requirements of the ITI in terms of training, qualifications and experience ensured that all those who responded to the questionnaire would hold the necessary professional status. Thirdly, a large proportion of the ITI's members work as freelancers, a sector of the market which would otherwise have been difficult to cover effectively.

Conversely, however, the principal disadvantage of using ITI members as a target group was that linguists working as staff translators and/or interpreters were liable to be under-represented, particularly those employed by international organizations who might be less inclined to join a professional body based in the United Kingdom. It was therefore felt necessary to conduct a second survey, of staff translators working for the European Parliament and the EC Commission in Luxembourg. A shortened version of the questionnaire used for the ITI survey was produced (see Appendix II), a number of the items being irrelevant to European Community staff. For the reasons discussed in section 6.2, it was thought inappropriate to put all the questions to the whole sample, and a distinction was therefore made between the 20 translators from the Parliament and the 34 from the Commission. Questionnaires were distributed in person to the Parliament translators, who were selected at random on the basis of their presence at work on the day of the survey in March 1990 and represent half the total number employed in the department; the Commission translators, representing all but one of the Luxembourg department's permanent staff, were interviewed face to face (not in all cases by the author) and given fewer questions to answer.

On the same lines, two surveys were conducted of employers of professional linguists. The first involved the sending of questionnaires to 100 known or potential employers of translators and/or interpreters in February 1990, identified on the basis of information obtained from works of reference and careers services, as described in section 7.1.1. This group consisted mainly of

private sector companies and nationalized industries, but also included seven government agencies and departments. A full list of these employers is contained in Appendix IV. In all cases, separate questionnaires were provided concerning the employment of translators and interpreters, designed to establish, amongst other things, the extent to which language services were required, the means used to obtain them, and employers' views on future trends in the volume of translation and interpreting work. Examples of both questionnaires may be found in Appendix III.

International organizations were almost totally excluded from the first survey of employers, on the grounds that they have special language needs and are often obliged to recruit their staff by procedures laid down by regulation. Since it had been assumed, correctly, as it proved, that the survey described above would produce considerably less data on interpreters than on translators, a study was carried out at an earlier stage (in March 1989) of the recruitment practices of the EC Commission in relation to interpreters. This took the form of discussions with the senior officials responsible for training and recruitment by an organization which is easily the world's largest employer of conference interpreters. Access was provided to the Commission's records of testing and recruitment programmes, contained in internal documents which must to some extent be classed as confidential.

Earlier in this chapter, in the description of how information on specialist training courses has been gathered, it was explained why on many occasions views or statements have been presented in

this thesis without supporting references or attribution. In short, this was because much of the material had been collected orally and because often no single authoritative viewpoint was available. The first of these considerations applies equally to the sections covering the structure of the professions in general and recruitment practices in particular, since a substantial amount of information was obtained orally in the course of discussions with colleagues and acquaintances in a number of organizations. On the second point, where views have been attributed to specific bodies, as for example with those of the Commission on the training and recruitment of interpreters, this has been done on the basis of the standing of the person or persons who expressed them, even if they have not been individually named.

Finally, it should be pointed out that the use of the masculine pronoun and possessive adjective throughout this text does not imply a prejudice against the many female members of the translating and interpreting professions, but is simply for the convenience of the writer.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PROFESSIONS

This chapter deals with the nature and structure of the professions of translation and interpreting, with particular reference to the United Kingdom. It first describes the different sectors in which translators and interpreters are employed, the work they do and the role of their professional organizations; the second main section covers the routes into the professions and considers employers' recruitment methods. As indicated at the end of the previous chapter, it is rarely possible for the material contained in these sections to be attributed to specific documentary sources, since it is based to a large extent on discussions with individual linguists and their employers, and on the author's ten years' experience as an official of the European Community. Lastly, there is a discussion of work on the personality profiles of interpreters and translators and its possible implications for training programmes.

* * *

3.1 The employment market

3.1.1 Translation

The process of translation is often perceived by laymen or even those who need the work done as a simple, though necessary service - a text is converted from one language into another by a person familiar with them both. The depth of linguistic knowledge required, let alone the capacity to research a complex field or match the style of the original, is all too frequently left unconsidered. A dictionary is seen as a sufficient tool for carrying out the job, with the result that in organizations which are not regular users or producers of translations, any employee with some qualification in modern languages is apt to be given occasional translation work to do. A similar lack of awareness applies to the quality of the finished product in the target language. Logic dictates that a text produced in the translator's mother tongue is likely to be superior to a translation by the same person into a foreign language: difficulties of comprehension can generally be resolved by consulting works of reference or seeking the advice of the author or colleagues with relevant expertise; errors of expression, on the other hand, can ultimately only be reliably detected and corrected by a native speaker. The countless examples of poor-quality translations, all too obviously by non-native speakers, of instruction manuals, publicity material and visitors' guides bear witness to the apparent readiness of even major manufacturing companies or public institutions to ignore such logic and opt instead for what is presumably a more expedient

solution in the short term. A frequent justification of this practice is that only a relatively small number of translators are able to work out of less widely taught languages such as Swedish or Japanese, so that native speakers of the source language have to be used instead. At best, such translations are a source of mild amusement; at worst, they seriously blur the meaning of the original and create an unnecessary barrier between the reader and the organization responsible for producing the text.

The existence of a considerable quantity of sub-standard translation of the kind described above, much of it destined for end users of manufactured products, does little to enhance the reputation of professional translators, whether in-house or freelance, who earn their living by producing texts whose quality often goes unnoticed. As will be discussed later in this section, efforts to improve the status of translators have focused on developing the image of an expert profession providing a specialized service to its clients.

It is possible to identify six different sectors in which translators from the United Kingdom are employed, either at home or abroad:

- (i) international organizations;
- (ii) large companies, including multinationals;
- (iii) smaller companies which nevertheless employ their own translation staff;
- (iv) the public sector, covering government agencies and departments;

- (v) translation agencies employing full-time staff;
- (vi) the freelance market, including cooperatives and translators engaged on retainer arrangements.

While all translators working in these areas can broadly be described as specialist linguists whose time is mainly spent translating documents of various kinds, the precise scope of their duties and their administrative status vary between employers. The article by Verrinder (1990) contains a discussion of some of the practical differences between the various sectors of the profession.

The size of translation departments ranges from a handful of staff in smaller companies and government bodies to over 100 full-time translators per official language at the EC Commission. The larger the department, the more likely it is to occupy a separate position in the structure of its parent organization, since the volume and importance of translation work will be reflected in a need for specialized management. Hence the translation departments of the European Community institutions, other major international organizations, multinational companies and the larger government departments are generally not linked to a particular branch of the administration, but provide a service to other departments on request. They tend to be managed by senior linguists with substantial experience of the workings and language requirements of the parent organization. Smaller translation departments often form part of library and information services or may be attached to the central administration, not necessarily under the authority of a career linguist. The same applies in cases where there is no

translation department as such, but simply one or two staff who are responsible for language work. The role of staff translators in general is described in the ITI booklet by Segerman-Peck (1987a), and their status and legal position by Graham (1985).

In the commercial sector, employers are obviously at liberty to define the terms of employment of translators and their position in the structure of the company as they wish. While this situation has some disadvantages for employees, who may be subject to all kinds of administrative edicts over which they have no influence or control, it does imply an element of flexibility: working conditions, career structure and remuneration, for example, may be open to negotiation and individuals can be rewarded for their performance. Translators working for government bodies and international organizations, on the other hand, are covered by the same system of grades and career brackets as other civil servants and officials (see, for example, the Staff Regulations of officials of the European Communities (1986), Title III). They have the benefit of greater security and are less likely to see their job descriptions altered, but the regulations which protect them in these respects act rather as constraints when it comes to career progress or incentives to raise the level of performance. In the UK Civil Service, linguists are taken into various administrative, executive and - in the case of the Ministry of Defence - scientific grades; they are generally reckoned to be given lower status than administrators with equivalent qualifications. International organizations such as the United Nations and the European Community have as a rule put linguist grades on a par financially and in terms

of internal career structure with those for university-educated administrators, but without allowing staff to move freely between the two categories (see EC Staff Regulations, Article 45). Moreover, while linguists tend to rise slightly faster than administrators through the grades, there is very often a bar at Head of Division level beyond which they are unable to progress. The EC Commission has recently proposed an amendment to the Staff Regulations that would enable linguists to apply for vacant administrative posts, but this has predictably encountered opposition from the administrators, who fear that their own career prospects will be disrupted by an influx of linguists.

The same considerations apply to the type of work performed by staff engaged as translators. In organizations where the duties attaching to particular categories of post are specifically defined, translators are often required to do nothing but translate documents into their mother tongue. This is certainly the case in all the European Community institutions, for example. In other international bodies, however, particularly those with only two working or official languages, it may be necessary to recruit staff capable of working into a language other than their own, though it should be emphasized that such translations would normally be revised by a native speaker. Smaller organizations or government departments may also require their translation staff to act as interpreters on occasion, especially for liaison work or 'whispering'. Freelance interpreters would usually be engaged for meetings involving the more specialized conference techniques, although it is by no means unknown for in-house translators with the

necessary expertise to be used instead. Other activities frequently carried out by translators are abstracting, where a summary is produced in the target language of the original full text, minute writing, in which a record of the proceedings of a multilingual meeting is drawn up, and the compilation of glossaries and other terminological aids. Lastly, management tasks are not entirely restricted to heads of translation departments and their senior staff: most organizations allocate part of their translation work to agencies or freelances, either on a regular basis or because of temporary increases in the workload, and responsibility for coordinating and supervising this process is frequently given to an individual staff translator. Similarly, where an organization such as a medium-sized company does not wish to set up its own translation department but sees a need for some degree of in-house expertise and control over work sent out to agencies or freelances, it might appoint a translation manager to carry out urgent or confidential jobs himself, organize the distribution of work to outside translators and monitor their performance.

Supervisory functions of this kind remain very much the exception rather than the rule, however. The great majority of staff translators will spend their working lives simply translating documents, a fact which results in rather more frustration and dissatisfaction on their part than is generally recognized. There is little scope for career progression, since the job is essentially the same on a translator's first day at work as on his last, and the number of posts involving broader responsibility is limited to one or two in a department. Promotion tends to be on the basis of

seniority rather than merit, and it is difficult to move sideways to a different sector, particularly in international organizations where the language services are effectively partitioned off from the rest of the secretariat. Moreover, the nature of the job requires translators to spend a large proportion of their time working on their own; they often have little contact with client departments and may remain unaware of what happens to a text once it has been translated. While the intellectual stimulus of the work may be enough to satisfy some translators, it is hardly surprising that others, as highly qualified linguists, begin to feel unfulfilled once they have demonstrated their ability to translate professionally and become aware of the limited openings available to them.

In the larger translation departments, some attempt has been made to counter this syndrome by creating internal hierarchies and allocating specific tasks to individuals. At the European Parliament, for example, a wider range of senior members of staff have been designated as revisers and given responsibility for checking work by their less experienced colleagues. Others have been assigned to newcomers to the department, with the task of providing them with information and advice during their probationary period, or asked to coordinate in-service training. It should be emphasized, however, that these functions are unrelated to grade and are thus connected more with job satisfaction than with job reward. At the EC Commission, translation groups specializing in particular subject areas have been set up within each translation division, which has had the effect not only of rationalizing the distribution

of work, but also of improving morale in general by creating a network of teams with recognized expertise.

The situation in the agency and freelance sector is conditioned by other factors. Whereas the traditional role of agencies has been to pass on work to freelances for translation, increased demand for language services and ever-shorter deadlines have led to a growth in the number of full-time translation staff which agencies employ. Such personnel are used to provide the rapid-response translation services recently introduced by organizations such as British Telecom and Thomas Cook. There are obviously considerable differences between working for an agency and employment as an in-house translator, in particular the lack of contact with the clients for whom translations are prepared and the imposition of a schedule of work which leaves the individual translator little scope for planning his use of time. On the other hand, a translator's salary will be made up of a guaranteed element combined with payments related to output, so that there is a direct incentive to perform well. While it is too early to predict the future development of this sector of employment, initial contacts suggest that there is likely to be a rapid turnover of staff, with established freelances putting in periodic stints of full-time work and other experienced translators working for agencies between temporary contracts elsewhere. It seems unlikely to provide an easy route into the profession for newly qualified translators, however, since agencies with a reputation to protect would presumably require some evidence of ability before committing themselves to any contractual arrangement.

Another recent development has been the establishment by the United Kingdom Government of a national network of Language-Export Centres, sponsored by the Department of Education and Science. The centres are collaborative ventures involving local educational institutions and business interests, launched with funding from the DES but becoming self-financing consultancies. Each offers local companies access to a range of services designed to boost export performance, including foreign language training, briefings on particular overseas markets and translation and interpreting. These services are to a large extent provided by the collaborating organizations, in particular the training in foreign languages. With regard to translation and interpreting, the Language-Export Centres act in much the same way as agencies, directing clients to members of a panel of local freelances and taking a proportion of the fee.

The freelance market itself is impossible to quantify because of the wide range of individuals performing translation work of this kind. At one end of the scale are professional translators who use a room in their home as an office and earn their living entirely from freelance translation; at the other are housewives with degrees in modern languages who translate only occasionally and almost as a hobby, perhaps for a single client. In between are people who combine freelance work with some other form of employment, not necessarily related to languages. It may be, for example, that an engineer with a knowledge of French or German decides to take on translation work in his own particular field. Many freelances

certainly adopt a strategy of specialization, with a view to establishing a relationship with a small number of regular clients.

A few translators, though nominally freelances, are effectively employed by a single organization which pays them a retainer to ensure that their services will be available when required. Details of the contracts involved naturally vary from case to case, but it is not unknown for the translator to specify a ceiling of words or pages per month or year beyond which further payment will be necessary. Such arrangements may be made when a staff translator in a relatively small organization leaves his employer and is not immediately replaced.

There is also evidence of a trend in recent years for freelances to group together in cooperatives in order to pool resources, reduce overheads and broaden their client base. A description of the thinking behind such moves is contained in the article by Imrie (1986).

The response of the bodies representing the interests of linguists to the two areas of difficulty described above - low standards and a poor career structure - has been to seek to redefine the image of translators by 'professionalising' their occupation: their argument is that professional translators can guarantee a certain standard of performance and should be accorded the same status and respect - and, by implication, career prospects - as other highly qualified personnel. Indeed, the very foundation of the Institute of Translation and Interpreting (ITI) in 1986 can be

seen as a move in this direction. Dedicated to promoting professional standards, the ITI is open only to practising linguists with relevant qualifications and experience, or who pass its entrance examinations. It collaborates closely with the Translators Association of the Society of Authors, representing literary translators, and has drawn up a Code of Professional Conduct for individual members and Standard Terms of Business for commissioned translation work. Beginning in 1990, the ITI is organizing a post-experience course for translators in conjunction with PCL and Brighton Polytechnic. The course runs over 20 weekday evenings or four complete weekends and covers four modules: translation and revision techniques, subject expertise, the translator and information technology, and translators and their business. With a membership of around 1,500 spread across a number of different grades, the ITI seems to have demonstrated that a need existed in the United Kingdom for a specialist professional body for interpreters and translators, separate from the more broadly based Institute of Linguists, a long-established body covering all kinds of activities involving the use of modern languages. Outside the United Kingdom, the Fédération Internationale des Traducteurs (FIT) is an umbrella body composed of national translator organizations. Individual translators are eligible for membership of the Association Internationale des Traducteurs de Conférence (AITC), but this has yet to acquire the prestige of the similarly titled organization representing interpreters; its members are concentrated in the United Kingdom, Switzerland and France.

3.1.2 Interpreting

As indicated in the previous section, a certain amount of translation work is carried out in the business world by staff with some knowledge of languages but who are not specialist translators. The same kind of staff are likely to be called upon to act as interpreters on occasion, for example to host groups of visitors or to facilitate discussions between company and client. While the assumptions on the part of those within the organization who request such interpreting services are likely to embody the same misconceptions that apply to translation, the results may well be different in each case. Whereas a mediocre translation which finds its way into print as an instruction booklet or publicity brochure remains open to criticism long after the work has been carried out and may affect the reputation of the translating profession in general, the ephemeral nature of interpreting means that an equally mediocre oral performance may attract no criticism whatever - indeed, those receiving the interpretation may be grateful that any service has been provided at all. The important thing is for an adequate level of mutual comprehension to have been achieved. Similarly, a good deal of informal interpreting is carried out in everyday situations by couriers, hostesses and receptionists to which professional standards of performance can hardly be applied.

There is in fact a very clear distinction to be drawn between these more or less casual exercises in communication and the profession of conference interpreting. The latter entails the provision of an essential service, under planned and controlled

conditions, without which multilingual conferences and meetings would not be able to take place. The techniques of conference interpreting are specialized to the extent that it would not normally be feasible for a person without appropriate training to attempt to perform such work. Only someone able to combine exceptional facility with languages with an aptitude for the task of interpreting, the necessary level of general or specialized knowledge and relevant personal qualities could hope to succeed without formal training.

The professional milieu can thus be clearly defined: it consists of interpreters who are able to earn their living by servicing meetings of various sizes at which more than one working language is used and a high degree of accuracy is required. Such interpreters fall into two categories: those employed as full-time staff by international organizations or government agencies and departments, and those who work as freelances, accepting assignments where and when they are available. Approximately 15% of the 2,000 or so members of the Geneva-based Association Internationale des Interprètes de Conférence (AIIC), which represents the great majority of conference interpreters outside Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, are full-time staff. This statistic should be qualified, however, by pointing out that newly trained interpreters recruited as permanent staff may not feel obliged to join AIIC in the same way as freelances who need the support of a professional organization. In his study of the development of interpreting, Bowen (1985) suggests that the total number of professional interpreters worldwide is between 3,000 and 6,000. Careers

literature such as 'Working in Languages' (1987), published by the Manpower Services Commission, suggests that there are some 400 interpreters with English as their active language (p. 23). It might be pointed out at this stage that although simultaneous interpreting has become the norm at multilingual committee meetings and assemblies, the consecutive mode has by no means disappeared, being used on occasions where the technical facilities necessary for simultaneous provision are inappropriate or unavailable. Keiser (1984) estimates that consecutive interpreting accounts for around 15% of all interpreting work (p. 199). The use of liaison interpreting would appear impossible to quantify in percentage terms; this can be regarded as a special technique which is required in certain specific contexts.

Staff interpreters working in the public sector are naturally subject to the same regulations as other civil servants or officials, with all the accompanying benefits in terms of job security, index-linked pay and allowances, and social welfare provision. Many of the comments made in the previous section regarding staff translators in international organizations and government service also apply to interpreters, although the two functions are often kept completely separate. At the EC Commission, for example, all interpreting activities are dealt with by a special unit with its own Director-General, the Joint Interpreting and Conference Service. Likewise at the European Parliament, the Interpreting Directorate forms part of the general administrative services and has no connection with the Directorate for Translation. Nevertheless, interpreters and translators are recruited into

equivalent grades and progress through them in a similar way, their careers being limited by the same restrictions on transfer into sectors not involving language work. Transfers between the interpreting and translation services are possible in theory, but very rarely take place because of the absence of working contacts and the lack of personnel qualified in both disciplines. Just as many staff translators will do nothing but translate documents into their mother tongue, so an even greater proportion of staff interpreters will do nothing but interpret into their mother tongue, since there are no secondary activities such as minute writing available and organizations which are large enough to employ specialist interpreters generally wish to use them as such. Only where staff have been specifically recruited as interpreter/translators does there seem to be an overlap of specialist functions. As in the case of translators, organizations with only two working or official languages may require interpreting staff to work both into their mother tongue from a foreign language and vice versa, rather than employ two full sets of interpreters.

Several of the potential sources of frustration that exist for staff translators also affect their counterparts in interpreting - routine work of a single kind, promotion on the basis of seniority rather than merit and limited scope for career development. In addition, they are subject to considerable stress at work, and the attractions of frequent contact with the participants at meetings can in the long term be negated by a feeling of always being on the sidelines, never an active player. For interpreters, however, such factors can be offset not only by strategies such as allocating

specific tasks to members of staff, but also by certain positive aspects of their work in general. On the management side, interpreters with a certain level of experience can be asked to assist in organizing a department's work, given responsibility for supervising trainees and new recruits or assigned to testing applicants for freelance work. Elements likely to provide interpreters with added job satisfaction are the possible variety of meetings they service, the contact with participants and with departments other than their own, and the opportunity for a certain amount of travel without undue disruption of family or social life. Not least, there is the status of interpreters - particularly full-time ones employed by international organizations - who are perceived by the outside world as members of a glamorous and exclusive profession.

Freelance interpreters obviously lack the job security and other statutory benefits enjoyed by their colleagues in full-time posts. On the other hand, they are their own masters, free of any constraints imposed by the administrative practices of bureaucratic organizations. Freelances are employed on the basis of short-term contracts for particular assignments in all sectors. Some are registered with agencies, others are approached directly by conference organizers who find their details in lists published by AIIC or national professional bodies. Major international organizations such as the United Nations agencies and the European Community institutions maintain extensive panels of freelances on whom they can call, in addition to their own in-house interpreting staff. In theory, those who wish can travel around the world, while

those who prefer to remain at home can base themselves in centres where work is plentiful such as Brussels or Geneva. Whether freelancers' diaries are actually filled in this way depends to a large extent on their individual reputations, areas of specialized knowledge and language combinations. An interesting finding of the survey of ITI members described in Chapter Six below concerns the larger than expected number of freelancers working in both interpreting and translation.

A key role in the development of the interpreting profession has been played by AIIC, which was founded in 1953. Apart from laying down a Code of Professional Conduct for its members and endeavouring to ensure that standards of interpreting are maintained, it has negotiated terms of employment for freelancers with the major international organizations which are now universally accepted. AIIC has also taken the initiative in securing the establishment of technical norms and standards, notably for simultaneous interpreting equipment, and in commissioning research on the effects of interpreters' work on their physical and mental well-being. Further details are contained in the article by Osers (1990).

3.2 Entry to the professions

3.2.1 Translation

All employers of translators look for particular qualities in their staff - a high level of competence in the languages from which they will be required to translate, some degree of familiarity with the subject-matter involved, the ability to translate well into the target language and preferably a certain amount of relevant work experience. The different routes into the profession for those trained in the United Kingdom are a reflection of these requirements. Some translators will have followed the conventional path of studying modern languages to degree level without any specialization. Others will have pursued careers in technical fields, at the same time acquiring proficiency in one or more foreign languages, and subsequently decided to apply their abilities to translation. In recent years, however, an increasing number of first degree courses have become available which combine the study of languages with tuition in other subject areas such as law, business studies and engineering. At their best, these do not simply consist of parallel course structures, but are designed as integrated programmes, with the language components incorporating material drawn from the relevant technical fields and possibly also including an element of training in practical translation. While such programmes will produce the occasional translator rather than a regular supply, the small number of specialist postgraduate courses in translation, some of which also involve interpreting, are aimed at preparing students for immediate employment as professional

linguists. Given that there would be little point in training students in a particular technical field - unless perhaps to meet the needs of a specific employer - they are introduced to a variety of specialized material and taught how to approach topics with which they are unfamiliar. A detailed discussion of the training opportunities available in the United Kingdom is contained in Chapters Four and Five below.

Attention has already been drawn to the lack of consultation and cross-fertilization between the higher education institutions responsible for translator training in the United Kingdom. A forum for such exchanges of information and ideas is provided at international level, however, by the Conférence permanente des directeurs des Instituts Universitaires pour la formation des Traducteurs et des Interprètes (CIUTI). Established in 1961 and supported by a subsidy from the EC Commission, this body meets from time to time to discuss matters concerning the training of professional linguists, in particular the requirements of major employers such as the Commission. CIUTI has 18 member institutions from 10 different countries, including Bath, Bradford and Heriot-Watt Universities from the United Kingdom.

Employers of translators recruit their staff in a number of different ways. International organizations are generally required by their regulations to recruit by open competition or on the basis of objective tests. Announcements of such examinations are placed in major national newspapers and periodicals, and details are circulated to professional organizations. In order to be admitted

to the tests, applicants must fulfil certain conditions which vary between organizations and according to their recruitment needs. There will often be an age limit and a nationality requirement, and always a specification of the languages to be offered. Sometimes this will be precise, for example where an organization only has two or three working languages. Multilingual organizations like the European Community institutions, on the other hand, may exclude certain language combinations in which they have no shortage of staff, such as French with German, or conversely require all candidates to offer at least one less common language, for instance Danish or Greek. To harmonize the testing procedures, all candidates must offer two major languages; however, they have the opportunity of gaining credit for being able to work from others by taking supplementary papers in the tests. The last type of condition which is frequently laid down concerns applicants' qualifications and experience. Most of those seriously contemplating a career as a professional translator will meet the requirement of holding a university degree or its equivalent, but many otherwise eligible candidates are refused admission to tests because they have not acquired a certain number of years' experience as a translator. Possession of a specialized qualification in translation, such as a UK postgraduate diploma, may confer exemption from some or all of the qualifying period, however.

Applicants who meet all the conditions laid down are invited to take the tests either at the seat of the organization concerned or in the country from which most candidates have applied. Typically, the examinations will consist of an intelligence or

general knowledge test, passages for translation from the candidate's major languages (for which dictionaries may normally be used) and an essay or summarizing test, followed by optional translation papers in other languages offered. Some organizations do not even mark the translation papers of candidates who fail the intelligence or general knowledge test; others take no account of performance in additional translation papers if a candidate has not obtained the pass-mark in his major languages. Applicants who pass the examinations are called for interview; a reserve list of successful candidates is compiled in order of merit, and posts which are available are offered to them in due course.

Each competition procedure is normally managed by a selection board consisting of representatives of the translation service, the administration and staff organizations. The process of advertising the competition, sending out details to those who express interest, screening applications, adjudicating disputes over eligibility, setting, organizing and marking the tests, and finally interviewing candidates who pass them is a notoriously lengthy one. It is not uncommon for a year or more to elapse between a competition being announced and the first successful candidate being offered a post. Moreover, the failure rate is extremely high: typical figures for competitions held for English-language translators at the European Parliament in the 1980s would be around 700 applications, 200 candidates invited to attend the tests, 150 actually doing so, 15 interviewed and 10 to 12 placed on a reserve list. The time taken to draw up this list means that some candidates will have accepted jobs elsewhere, become unavailable for some other reason or simply

lost interest. Coupled with the relatively high turnover of staff in a department of some 45 translators, this means that competitions are launched at fairly regular intervals, perhaps every two years.

Large commercial employers generally start the recruitment process by taking out display advertisements in the national press and initially screen applicants on the basis of their qualifications, relevant work experience, specialist knowledge and personal references. Requirements are likely to be closely tailored to the employer's business: a German pharmaceutical company, for example, might specify that applicants must have German as their first foreign language, a diploma in technical and specialized translation and some understanding of chemical or pharmaceutical technology. On the other hand, it would be counter-productive to deter a large proportion of potential applicants by laying down too many precise conditions; a balance is therefore sought between attracting an adequate number of generally suitable candidates and excluding those who are not sufficiently qualified. The subsequent process of testing, interviewing and selecting the best person to fill the post will normally take place quickly. The tests often include some form of personality assessment: it may be thought essential for a translator to be able to work as part of a team or, in contrast, to cope with a solitary working environment. A similar procedure is followed by government agencies and departments, although delays may occur because of the need for short-listed applicants to be given security clearance.

For companies employing only small numbers of translators, it may be uneconomic to spend the considerable amount of time and money on their recruitment which is involved in the procedure described above. Some will therefore not advertise their vacancies but use other methods to find the necessary staff. This situation operates to the advantage of the newly qualified translator, who is not in direct competition with more experienced applicants and may be able to gain access to the profession on the basis of his qualifications alone or with the help of personal recommendations. An increasingly common practice is for the person responsible for recruiting translation staff to contact fellow employers, agencies or, in particular, those in charge of specialist courses in translation, with a view to finding a suitably qualified freelance or a student whose training is nearing completion to fill a vacant post. Evidence of this practice is provided by the survey of employers, the results of which are described in Chapter Seven. Where a translator is recruited directly from a specialist course, there are benefits for all concerned. The employer fills his vacancy at minimal cost with a qualified translator who has to some extent already proved his ability by gaining admission to the course; moreover, it would hardly be in the interest of the course authorities to recommend a less than competent student for immediate employment. The course authorities themselves can demonstrate that their programme is meeting its objective of training students as professional linguists. Finally, the student has a job to go to at the end of his course, providing him with an opportunity to gain valuable practical experience which will stand him in good stead when applying for posts elsewhere later in his career.

It is not unknown for larger organizations to adopt the same recruitment strategy, particularly when a single person is able to exercise significant influence over appointments. Once implemented successfully, direct recruitment from a particular course is likely to be repeated, creating a link between employers and specialist courses which clearly places students on the latter at an advantage in the employment market. This type of arrangement has been much exploited by those responsible for running the postgraduate translation course at PCL, from which half the students - around 15 individuals - can expect to go directly to jobs in the commercial sector.

Another means of gaining a foothold in the profession is to secure a traineeship with a translation department. Traineeships are available in a variety of international organizations and national bodies and involve working in the department for anything between four weeks and six months at relatively low pay. They have the advantage of providing valuable practical experience and on-the-job training, together with useful contacts for subsequent permanent employment. Although in theory any suitably qualified graduate is eligible for English-language traineeships, preference tends to be given to applicants from specialist courses in the United Kingdom, on the grounds that they will be of more immediate use as translators, having already demonstrated both an interest in and an aptitude for the work. As described in Chapter Five, short traineeships virtually form an integral part of certain specialist courses, notably those run by the Universities of Bath and Bradford. While international organizations are generally unable to consider

recruiting trainees directly into permanent posts, it quite frequently happens that successful trainees are offered temporary contracts which may be extended for as long as two or three years, by which time an open competition is likely to have been held. This does not imply that competitions are organized in such a way as to favour candidates known to the recruiting organization, particularly since the scripts are marked anonymously; it is inevitable, however, that temporary staff will develop a translating style which is acceptable to the department in which they work, thereby increasing their chances of success in a competition.

Specialist courses can also provide their students with useful contacts for freelance work. Otherwise, the conventional strategy for translators seeking to enter the freelance market is to circulate their personal details and samples of their work to agencies, who may require them to take a test before offering any commissions. The next step might be to specialize in a particular field, with a view to establishing direct links with clients. The need for such approaches to be made reflects a paradox to which attention is drawn by Segerman-Peck (1988): 'It is one of life's ironies that freelance translation is ideal for people who like working on their own, but self-marketing and seeking out work (an indispensable part of running a business) call for a more outgoing personality. Some freelance translators fail because they have not put enough effort into making their skills known' (p. 7).

3.2.2 Interpreting

Employers of interpreters normally have only one requirement - that those concerned should be able to perform effectively. Applicants for work who have not established themselves in the interpreting profession, for example by obtaining membership of AIIC, will therefore be given a thorough test of their abilities in the simultaneous and consecutive modes to determine whether they are suitable for employment. As indicated in section 3.1.2 above, such applicants may well possess the necessary facility with languages, appropriate general or specialized knowledge and even an intellectual aptitude for the task, but are unlikely to succeed in the test unless they have previously mastered the techniques of interpreting by following a course of specialized training. For would-be interpreters from the United Kingdom, there are three main options available. The first is to take one of the very few undergraduate courses which involve a substantial element of interpreting, though further training may still be necessary. The second is to obtain a place on one of the three specialist postgraduate courses in interpreting, two of which also involve translation, or on a similar course abroad. The third is to gain admission to one of the short courses in conference interpreting organized by international organizations such as the EC Commission or the United Nations.

The BA in Languages (Interpreting and Translating) offered by Heriot-Watt University, the postgraduate courses in interpreting and translation at the Universities of Bath and Bradford, and the

Postgraduate Diploma in Conference Interpretation Techniques available at the Polytechnic of Central London are discussed in detail in Chapters Four and Five. PCL is the only one of these institutions which is not a member of CIUTI, but its course is one of the seven in the world recommended by AIIC as suitable for preparing entrants to the profession.

It seems appropriate at this stage to consider the criteria applied by AIIC in assessing training courses. The following is a summary of the basic standards recommended by AIIC in its 'Guide to establishments offering courses in conference interpretation' (1984).

- (i) Students should hold a first degree or equivalent qualification in any subject. An entrance test should assess the candidate's knowledge of languages, aptitude for the profession, general knowledge and maturity.
- (ii) The course should be full-time for one academic year.
- (iii) The curriculum should include consecutive and simultaneous techniques, together with elements designed to stimulate intellectual curiosity in a range of subject areas.
- (iv) As regards language combinations, English and French (active or passive) are seen as essential. Students are advised to have two other languages related to demand on different markets, and course organizers should carry out regular

market surveys so that the range of languages on offer is closely adapted to market demand. No language should be taught *ab initio*.

- (v) Conference interpretation techniques can only and should only be taught by practising conference interpreters, as far as possible members of AIIC.
- (vi) Final examinations should be conducted by a board of external examiners including professional conference interpreters. Students should be allowed to resit the examination once only, but in this case should resit all the tests.
- (vii) The final diploma must clearly list the working languages in which the student has passed the examination in simultaneous and consecutive interpretation.
- (viii) A list should be drawn up of students who have obtained the diploma, indicating those who are actually working as conference interpreters, the number of AIIC members and the ratio of successful graduates to students enrolled, which should ideally be 80%.
- (ix) There should be no discrimination regarding course fees between foreign students and nationals of the country in which the training institution is located.

These recommendations are interspersed with justifications of the involvement of AIIC itself in course design, teaching and assessment, and criticisms of universities 'still firmly entrenched in the Middle Ages' (p. 6). Leaving aside certain points of detail which seem difficult to explain (why, for example, a training institution should organize a course which aims to fail 20% of its intake), the standards laid down would probably be broadly acceptable to university authorities except for the question of teaching staff. AIIC argues that 'medicine cannot be taught by someone who has not practised it, nor engineering by someone who is not an engineer. The same rule applies to interpretation. How can someone teach interpreting if he is not or has not been an interpreter himself? Interpreters are not language teachers and should not be regarded as dangerous potential rivals by their university colleagues' (p. 6).

The problem is that universities tend not to be geared to organizing specialist courses taught by experts from outside. Staffing and funding arrangements normally assume that teaching will be carried out by the university's own academic staff, and it would hardly be feasible to recruit specialists in interpreting, for example, who can offer little other expertise and may in any case wish to continue practising their profession. Courses taught by outsiders may bring in a certain amount of revenue and enhance the standing of the institution, but otherwise might just as well be organized elsewhere. Indeed, a logical extension of AIIC's argument would be that it should set up training programmes of its own. The situation is different in UK polytechnics and similar institutions

overseas which are able to make liberal use of part-time staff, including practising interpreters. This situation perhaps accounts for the very small number of training programmes which have been approved by AIIC.

It is also possible to take issue with AIIC's assertion that only interpreters should teach others to interpret. While some input must clearly be provided by individuals who are active in the profession, non-interpreters also have an important part to play, for example by coordinating the tuition given by outsiders, supervising practice, developing students' general knowledge and awareness of specialized fields and by providing a listener's perspective. Moreover, they are accustomed to teaching students. AIIC comments, somewhat disingenuously: 'Of course, not all interpreters are particularly gifted teachers but the "teaching" they do is quite different from traditional teaching: they are required to demonstrate, to simulate real-life situations, in short to guide students along the right track' (pp. 6-7). Such a distinction seems entirely spurious, and serves only to reinforce the mistaken idea that interpreting is an profession reserved for the chosen few, who perform to the admiration of the uninitiated and challenge neophytes to match them.

A direct route into employment as an interpreter is provided by the short courses run by international organizations, the most accessible of which for United Kingdom candidates is that offered by the EC Commission in Brussels. The following description of this

course is based on material supplied by senior officials and information contained in a booklet issued by the Commission in 1988.

The aim of the course is to provide accelerated training of conference interpreters who will meet the requirements of the Joint Interpreting and Conference Service, which is responsible for supplying interpretation at the meetings held by the Commission, the Council of Ministers, the Economic and Social Committee and the European Investment Bank. It is open to university graduates in any discipline who are not more than 30 years old, but is not intended for those already holding a qualification in either translation or interpreting. No previous knowledge of interpreting is necessary. Applicants are required to have as their mother tongue or language of habitual use one of the nine official languages of the European Community, to comprehend two more of these languages thoroughly and to be well informed on current affairs, particularly economics and politics. Applications may be submitted at any time of the year and are judged on the basis of candidates' qualifications and in the light of the prevailing needs of the Community institutions. Initially selected candidates are then required to undergo an aptitude test for interpreting at which they also have to demonstrate their command of languages. Those who pass this test may be offered a place on the course, but must undertake to remain in the employment of the Commission as temporary staff for a continuous period of at least two years after the training programme has been successfully completed.

The initial training contract is for a period of two months. This is twice extended by two months if the student interpreter passes the tests held prior to each expiry date. The students attend training exercises organized for their benefit and participate in the lectures and visits organized for trainees from all Commission departments. The first two months of the course are devoted to preparatory exercises and consecutive interpretation, with simultaneous work being introduced only after the first intermediate tests. In the sixth month, students carry out practice work at meetings, under supervision. During their training, students receive a grant from the Commission of the same amount as that paid to other trainees.

From time to time, the Commission and other international bodies organize open competitions for interpreters on the same lines as those for translators. The conditions laid down in notices of competition include details of the number and combination of working languages which candidates must offer. For the European Community institutions, it is becoming the norm for three working languages to be required, although two may be accepted if a candidate is able to offer a less common language which is in demand. Other forms of recruitment are rare, and any posts advertised would be for experienced interpreters or those with some special knowledge or ability, such as an unusual language combination.

The final test which entitles successful student interpreters to a two-year contract with the Commission is the same as that used for screening applicants for freelance work, similar versions of

which are used by the European Parliament and other international bodies. Obtaining regular freelance work by passing such a test is one means whereby interpreters who are starting their career can gain the experience needed to become members of AIIC. To secure membership, an interpreter must accumulate 200 days of paid work and be sponsored by five current AIIC members. This may take a considerable time, but once on the AIIC register a freelance interpreter can expect to find work more easily. Until then, he is reliant on his own endeavours, but may be helped by contacts made through training institutions. For example, senior interpreters are often used as external examiners by interpreting schools and may be sufficiently impressed by students' performance in their final examinations to offer them freelance work after the end of their course.

Other factors which are likely to influence newly qualified interpreters' success in finding freelance work are their combination of working languages, versatility, areas of specialist knowledge and choice of domicile. The last of these is important because the organizer of a conference or meeting will look first for locally based interpreters, to whom he will not have to pay travel expenses, compensation for travelling time or per diem allowances, rates for all of which have been established by AIIC. For an interpreter from the United Kingdom, it is therefore advantageous to be based in a city which is not only the seat of a number of international organizations but also a venue for multilingual conferences of all kinds - in Brussels, Luxembourg or Geneva, therefore, rather than London.

3.3 The personality of professional linguists

Leaving aside the frequent failure of the layman to distinguish between the two professions, translators and interpreters clearly operate in different contexts and organize their working lives in different ways. Translators will probably work alone in an office, interpreters often work in teams and are actively involved in the conduct of conferences and meetings. Their work is dissimilar to the extent that the product of their intellectual effort is delivered in a different form and on a vastly different timescale. Moreover, the two functions are often separated for administrative purposes and there may be little contact between their representative bodies. Such considerations, coupled with the tendency of the interpreting profession to cultivate an image of exclusiveness, have led observers to conclude that translating and interpreting are jobs for two different types of person. Steadman (1982) asserts that: 'The two professions require different personality types: translating is a more introspective, reflective occupation, whereas for interpreting one has to be an extrovert, at ease in a wide variety of social situations' (p. 54). The same point is made, somewhat more picturesquely, by Hendry (1969): 'The interpreter, then, will be a person whose social "bump" is well developed, and who is apt to be garrulous. The translator may be found to be quiet and unassuming even if he, too, is able quickly to frame sentences and expressions for whatever he is asked to translate' (p. 16).

Various descriptions of the qualities required to become a translator or interpreter have been given by their professional organizations. In two booklets produced for the ITI, Segerman-Peck (1987a and b) indicates that translators need to be independent, self-reliant and capable of self-discipline, since they spend a good deal of time working on their own. They should also be cooperative, however, in order to work with colleagues and develop good relations with clients. A systematic approach is needed not only for translation work itself, but also for keeping records and carrying out background research. Translators should have an enquiring mind and be resourceful and tactful, as they need to learn about new subject areas and may have to obtain information from potentially uncooperative outsiders. Stamina and concentration are necessary to cope with complex material and the pressure of deadlines, and personal integrity is essential, with all work done being treated as confidential.

AIIC (1984) lists the following mental and physical qualities which are desirable in interpreters:

- ' - analytical mind and intuition;
- quick reactions and ability to adapt immediately to different speakers, situations and subjects;
- power of concentration;
- above-average physical and nervous stamina;
- excellent memory;
- art of public speaking and pleasant voice;
- great intellectual curiosity

- absolute intellectual integrity;
- tact and diplomacy' (pp. 3-4).

Allowing for the fundamental differences in working context, these two sets of attributes are perhaps not as dissimilar as might have been expected.

A particularly interesting piece of research in this field is described by Henderson (1984), who set out to investigate whether the different mental approaches required for conference interpreting and professional translating were in fact reflected in corresponding differences in personality. Basing his work on samples of professional translators and interpreters, he therefore aimed to compile and compare the personality profiles of the two groups, at the same time determining the view held by each profession of the other. In the light of his findings, he then sought to establish whether personality testing might usefully be employed as a means of predicting the career paths of would-be professional linguists.

Henderson took as his sample a total of 65 translators and 35 interpreters working mainly for international organizations, 47 of whom had English as their mother tongue. Firstly, using a biographical and attitude questionnaire, he obtained opinions on the qualities which were desirable in translators and interpreters and on the personalities of 'typical' members of the professions. As summarized by the author below, the results largely confirmed the existing stereotype, with each group's view of the other tending to corroborate that group's own self-image.

'Stereotype of translators

When all responses were classified, the following broad categories emerged in respect of translators:

(1) introversion; (2) perfectionism; (3) self-sufficiency; (4) adaptability; (5) limited ambition; (6) liking for routine; (7) social isolation; (8) interest in languages; (9) wide-ranging curiosity; (10) sense of frustration; (11) self-doubt; (12) pedantry; (13) eccentricity' (p. 103).

'Stereotype of interpreters

Classification of responses produced a greater number of separate headings than for the translators:

(1) extroversion; (2) self-reliance; (3) empathy; (4) articulateness; (5) the actor; (6) speed of response (7) intellect; (8) wide interests - jack of all trades; (9) superficiality; (10) arrogance; (11) anxiety; (12) frustration; (13) liking for variety; (14) background; (15) professional attitudes' (p. 112).

Henderson next collected data through a personality factor questionnaire, which provided a score for each subject on each of sixteen personality traits or factors, and processed these statistically to generate a personality profile for each group. When these were compared, the results proved somewhat surprising. Firstly, the degree of overlap between the personality profiles of each group was far greater than had been expected: there were in fact very few points of difference between them. Secondly, those differences which were established showed translators to be more

apprehensive than interpreters, which conforms to part of the stereotype, and also more intelligent, which certainly does not. The latter difference was accentuated when the findings were weighted so as to place greater emphasis on the responses of more experienced subjects. Lastly, both translators and interpreters were shown to be significantly more anxious than the average British undergraduate, on the basis of a previous study conducted on similar lines which was used to provide a control group. This finding was seen as difficult to explain.

In the final phase of his research, Henderson monitored the progress of 46 postgraduate students taking the specialist course in interpreting and translation at the University of Bradford. He recorded a variety of data concerning these students, such as their preference for one discipline or the other, the assessment provided by their tutors and their performance in examinations, and carried out a further exercise in personality testing, based on the questionnaire used previously. In the light of the students' subsequent career patterns, an analysis was made of the scope for using any of these elements for predicting areas of job success and thus possibly for career counselling, selecting students for specialist training, and recruitment by employers. Given the substantial overlapping between the two sample groups of translators and interpreters, identifying potential future members of each profession on the basis of personality testing was acknowledged to be difficult. However, the author remained optimistic that further refinement might be possible and that personality assessment could

ultimately be of use as a predictive instrument, in conjunction with other data.

While accepting the evidence of broad similarity between the personalities of translators and interpreters, Henderson was most reluctant to agree with the finding that interpreters were less intelligent than translators. In attempting to account for this result, he suggested that the data might have been distorted by the fact that while the responses were collected in English, 53% of his subjects had other languages as their mother tongue. Otherwise, a possible explanation could lie in the different approaches to problem solving implicit in the two activities. If the research as a whole is to be considered valid, however, in particular the method used to determine personality, it seems difficult to treat the findings selectively, even if they may on occasion be inconvenient in terms of the general thrust of the project.

A question left unanswered is the extent to which students' preference for translation or interpreting as a career is conditioned by the stereotype view of the two professions, a view shown by this research to be shared by the professionals themselves. Henderson's main practical conclusion was that there is no reason for excluding students from one activity or the other on grounds of personality alone: 'In short, both translating and interpreting are sensible and arguably vital ingredients in a degree course' (p. 250). His project also succeeded in presenting the two professions in a new light: 'This research has thus perhaps contributed to dispelling certain images which may contain an

element of myth: not only in terms of the stereotypes, which are possibly simplistic; but also regarding the interpreter, particularly, who is commonly projected as a person having rare and special qualities - a projection for which the interpreters' own very eloquent lobby is in part responsible' (p. 250).

Some of the implications concerning careers advice and the organization of specialist training courses need further discussion, however. Firstly, it seems clear that would-be translators or interpreters should not be deterred from attempting to enter one profession or the other simply because they are considered lacking in some personality factor commonly thought to be required. On the other hand, it would be appropriate to draw attention to the differences between the two professions in terms of working practices and lifestyle, and of course to take account of the individual's aptitude for the type of work involved. Similarly, selection procedures for specialist courses should concentrate on assessing aptitude and potential rather than seeking to determine whether a candidate's personality conforms to a conventional type. Particular care is needed when judgements on admissions are based to a large extent on the intuition of those responsible for a course, since they may rely less on an objective appraisal of a candidate's worth than on a subjective view of his personal suitability for the profession. Moreover, staff taking such decisions will inevitably tend to apply criteria derived from their own past experience, rather than looking forward to future developments in the employment market and career structures.

A further issue concerns specialist courses on which both translation and interpreting are taught. Henderson's findings indicate that the two disciplines need not be reserved for different types of personality. Hence there is no reason why aspiring professional linguists who have no strong preference for one activity over the other and who are capable of developing either into translators or interpreters should restrict their career prospects by embarking on a course which excludes one field altogether. For such students, it must surely be advantageous to keep their options open as long as possible. Whether it is feasible, in practical and pedagogical terms, to teach both disciplines in the context of a one-year postgraduate course is a question considered in Chapters Five and Eight of this thesis.

Finally, it should be pointed out that the similarity established between the personalities of translators and interpreters undermines to some extent the separation of the professions described earlier in this chapter. If the types of person engaged in the two occupations are not, after all, particularly different, there may be some scope for modifying current structures of employment with a view to merging these functions where appropriate. Needless to say, such a development would entail a considerable change in the attitudes of the professions. It should be borne in mind, however, that Henderson's fieldwork was actually carried out in 1974 and 1975, since when the volume of translation and interpreting work has considerably expanded, with an accompanying increase in the number of individuals active in the two fields.

CHAPTER FOUR

OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRAINING

The methods used to obtain information on the opportunities available for students to be trained in the practical disciplines of interpreting and translation have been described in Chapter Two. In the light of the various surveys conducted and the follow-up to them, it proved possible to divide these opportunities into a number of different categories. Full details are given in this chapter, with the undergraduate and postgraduate levels being considered separately.

* * *

4.1 Undergraduate provision

At 69 of the 92 higher education institutions surveyed, the undergraduate courses contained no element of interpreting work or specialized translation. It almost goes without saying that conventional exercises in translation from and into a foreign language formed part of every first degree course, with some variation in subject-matter between the literary and the institutional type of text. A very clear distinction may be drawn, however, between these traditional undergraduate course components, whose purpose is essentially to improve students' knowledge of

language or institutions, and the more vocationally oriented course units, options or teaching exercises which are designed to introduce students, even if only briefly, to the practicalities of translation as a career.

The remaining 23 institutions all offered some kind of interpreting and/or specialized translation work in at least one language taught to first degree level. At 11 of these, such work either formed an integral part of the course or could be taken as an option, but in both cases represented an element of specialist training. At 11 others, it merely took the form of teaching exercises within a more conventional course framework. Further details are given in sections 4.1.1 and 4.1.2 below.

The last institution, Heriot-Watt University, offers a BA degree course in Languages (Interpreting and Translating) which contains many elements found in the specialist postgraduate courses. It is therefore considered separately from the other training possibilities at undergraduate level in section 4.2.

4.1.1 Courses with specialist options or components

The 11 institutions offering courses in this category are dealt with here in alphabetical order. In each case, a brief description is given of the opportunities available, based on the information provided by the institutions themselves, followed by comments on their respective points of interest.

4.1.1.1 Aston University

French and German are the two major languages taught at Aston and it is possible to study them singly, jointly or in a wide range of combinations with unrelated subjects such as physics, geology and biochemistry. The courses are closely integrated between the study of the foreign language and of the society in which it is used. Where either language is taken at major level, the fourth year of the course includes core units in interpreting techniques and specialized translation. For French, these take the form of an introduction to the techniques of liaison interpreting and classes in translation on particular topics. The equivalent work in German is designed to have 'professional relevance' and involves translating, abstracting and elements of interpreting.

It is possible for students to attend courses at an Interpreting Institute in a French or German-speaking country during their year abroad. Alternatively, a placement may be found in a language service in commerce or industry. These are of course only some of the many options available.

In statistics covering the job destinations of Combined Honours language graduates from Aston between 1977 and 1984, it is indicated that 2% of such graduates embarked on careers as interpreters or translators. The largest proportion (21%) found jobs in commerce, closely followed by those employed in the financial sector (18%) (Aston University Modern Languages Department Handbook, 1985, p. 14). Nevertheless, publicity material states

that 'many (graduates) enter careers in industry, commerce and the public service, both in positions where competence in a foreign language and knowledge of foreign societies and cultures is a useful ancillary skill, and as full-time professional linguists (e.g. abstracting, translating, interpreting' (Undergraduate Prospectus for 1987 entry, p. 82).

Aston provides a good illustration of a tendency which emerges clearly from the mass of prospectuses and similar material published by higher education institutions with a view to attracting applicants for their courses, namely to exploit the general perception of certain careers in languages as in some way glamorous or exciting by giving prominence to particular key words such as 'interpreting', 'specialized' and 'professional', whether in the descriptions of coursework or the summaries of students' likely career prospects. Additional emphasis is provided by the use of photographs showing students using word-processors, wearing headphones or practising interpreting, together with some judicious sampling of statistics.

An example of the former technique can be seen on page 83 of the Aston prospectus, where there is a large photograph captioned 'Using video to monitor interpreting techniques'. In the foreground are three students seated around a microphone. Behind them is a group of another nine or ten students, evidently watching their colleagues. Between the two groups is a tripod-mounted video camera trained on the three who are in conversation. The picture it is showing can be seen on a television screen which is facing towards

the group of three and thus also the reader of the prospectus. To the casual observer - or perhaps the interested school-leaver - the photograph represents a typical scene from the course; on reflection, however, its use raises a number of questions.

The first of these questions concerns the choice of subject for the photograph, which is the only one in the modern languages section of the prospectus to show students at work - the other two show them in their common room. Given that an introduction to interpreting techniques is a core component of both major-level language courses, it would seem perfectly legitimate to select a photograph of that class for inclusion in the prospectus. Using it as the only depiction of students at work might nevertheless be seen as giving undue weight to what is a minor element of the course as a whole. This consideration leads on to the second question, which is whether the substance of this interpreting component really justifies the prominence given it by the photograph. While not seeking to disparage the quality of the tuition provided at Aston, it remains an undeniable fact that an introduction to liaison interpreting can in no way be seen as paving the way to a career as a professional interpreter, except perhaps in the sense that it may give students a better idea of their abilities when considering further training and to a limited extent prepare them for the selection procedures involved. This observation applies in particular to those students taking only one major language, who would generally be ineligible both for professional training and for any regular form of employment as an interpreter.

Thirdly, the composition of the photograph appears questionable, highlighting as it does the technical hardware in use on the course. There is obviously nothing untoward in a class of students observing three of their colleagues practising liaison interpreting in front of a microphone. A video camera might conceivably be used to record the performances of different individuals in various roles, although an audio tape recorder would serve much the same purpose, since the video camera is not recording the students' note-taking techniques but showing a head-and-shoulders image. Surely, however, the camera would not be placed between the two groups of students so as to obstruct the observers' view, and there is no reason whatever for having the television monitor displaying a live picture turned towards the conversing students - except, of course, that it increases the impact of the photograph and associates the class in the reader's mind with the ostensibly high-technology, 'glamorous' working environment of the professional interpreter.

This association of coursework with careers as professional linguists is reinforced by encouraging references to students' employment prospects, an example of which has already been quoted from the Aston prospectus. The figure of 2% of all modern languages graduates between 1977 and 1984 embarking on careers as interpreters or translators would seem to show, however, that relatively few openings are available and that in this field Aston has no particular advantage over other higher education institutions. Moreover, it is not clear whether the students involved required further training after graduating from Aston. In any event, the

small numbers involved once again call into question the prominent place occupied by interpreting and the wording of the descriptions of career prospects in the publicity material for courses in modern languages.

It must be emphasized that these strictures in no way apply solely to Aston, which has simply been used here as an illustration. The same techniques are employed by other higher education institutions whose claims for their courses are described in the following sections.

4.1.1.2 University of Bath

The BA in Modern Languages and European Studies course allows students to take either French and German at joint major level, or French or German at major level together with Italian or Russian as a minor language. Apart from language studies, the first two years of the course cover linguistics, the institutions and modern literature of the relevant countries and economic and political developments in contemporary Europe. In the final year, the classes in language work remain compulsory course elements, but the remainder of the course consists entirely of options. These are divided into two groups, European and national: the options in the former category are intended to appeal to all students regardless of the language combination being studied; those in the latter relate to individual languages or countries and include a wide range of cultural, social and political topics, together with certain

specialist language options. Students are required to select one European and five national options, including at least two from each language group.

The specialist language options available in French are two 20-hour modules taught for one hour a week over two terms, the first in translation and the second in interpreting. In German, only a translation option is available.

In the French interpreting option, students begin with liaison work before moving on to the consecutive and simultaneous modes, using the same facilities as the students on the specialist postgraduate course. Its aim is to provide an introduction to the techniques of interpretation and thereby a possible basis for further training. The translation option is rather more ambitious, being designed to introduce students to the techniques of documentary translation in a number of specialized registers, in order to prepare them for work as professional translators.

The syllabus of the translation option in German is somewhat broader, covering an introduction to translation theory, lexicography and terminology, the translation of general, political and economic texts from German into English and from English into German, and the translation of scientific and technical texts from German into English.

The 1990 course brochure merely describes these options as being intended 'for students who might perhaps be contemplating a

career in translation and/or interpreting'. A chart of former students' career destinations indicates that 12% of Bath graduates have become professional linguists. Otherwise, no mention is made of the specialist postgraduate course, of any expertise or reputation in the translating and interpreting fields, or indeed of the facilities available. This low-key approach might be said to represent the opposite extreme to the active 'marketing' of courses featuring some element of interpreting or specialized translation work discussed in the preceding section. Whereas this latter technique is apt to present a distorted image of certain first degree programmes, the restrained and more objective summary provided by Bath perhaps errs on the side of caution, since it fails to give prospective applicants a complete picture of what is available. This is particularly unfortunate in the case of Bath, where the training opportunities for undergraduate students in this field could justifiably be given greater prominence, without trading unduly on the reputation of its established postgraduate course.

4.1.1.3 University of Bradford

Students at Bradford take two languages chosen from French, German, Russian and Spanish, the last two of which may be studied *ab initio*. The course structure is slightly unusual, since the year spent abroad runs from February to February in the second and third years, with the result that students are in attendance at Bradford for part of all four academic years instead of taking the entire third year off. The subjects studied include economics, politics,

modern European literature and the contemporary society of the relevant countries.

The course begins with a two-term foundation stage, followed by a pre-placement stage lasting until February of the second year. The latter contains an introduction to interpreting, beginning with liaison exercises and moving on to consecutive work, which remains a core language-teaching component throughout the course. Students who display the necessary aptitude may start to practise simultaneous interpreting shortly before their overseas placement, although this form of interpreting is considered a specialized technique and is not a compulsory element. Excellent conference interpreting facilities are available. The final stage of the course begins when students return from their placement in February of the third year and includes 'basic' interpreting, which is essentially a continuation of the liaison and consecutive work introduced before the placements. In the fourth year, however, students are required to take two advanced language options, which are either conference interpreting or specialized translation in any of the languages taught.

The specialized translation options build on the work done in the first three years of the course by introducing students to a variety of new registers, including some technical material. Similarly, the conference interpreting options involve simultaneous and consecutive practice as an extension of the ordinary coursework. It does seem possible, however, to draw a distinction between these advanced options, which provide a genuine introduction to

professional techniques and are not dissimilar to elements of Bradford's specialist postgraduate course, and the compulsory parts of the curriculum - particularly in interpreting - which are oriented more towards improving linguistic competence and developing students' versatility and speed of reaction. This distinction is analagous to the one made at the beginning of this chapter between courses which include an element of specialized training and those which merely use interpreting and translation exercises as part of their overall methodology. Here it can in effect be applied to different components of the same course.

The problem for potential applicants is to distinguish between the teaching of interpreting and translation as disciplines in their own right and their use as language-teaching techniques, a difficulty liable to be compounded by favourable references in publicity material to career prospects or, conversely, by inadequate information on course content and the facilities available.

This observation leads one to consider a paradox common to a number of institutions offering a serious introduction to interpreting or specialized translation in the context of an undergraduate course: on the one hand, it has to be recognized that such an introduction will not as a rule prepare students for direct entry to the relevant profession, particularly in the case of interpreting, where further training will normally be necessary; on the other hand, students will have acquired some degree of competence which could be a useful extra qualification in the eyes of employers and should therefore be exploited to the full. Thus at

Bradford the course authorities readily acknowledge that the undergraduate interpreting programme is not professionally oriented (though the final year options are seen as providing a useful introduction), while the departmental prospectus states that 'graduates should also be competent to act as general and industrial interpreters and translators' (Undergraduate Course Guide for 1987 entry, p. 3). It may be that some subtle distinction is intended between 'general and industrial' interpreters - not a commonly used description - and mainstream conference interpreters, but this would be lost on all but the most discerning readers and very likely on any prospective applicant for the course, for whom the above statement could well be misleading.

4.1.1.4 Ealing College of Higher Education

The BA course in Applied Language Studies is unusual in that it requires all students to take one language *ab initio*, in combination with one or two languages at advanced level or one at advanced and one at intermediate level. German, Russian and Spanish are taught at all levels, with French and English (for non-native English speakers who have French, German or Spanish as a base language) offered only as advanced languages. Throughout the course, language tuition is accompanied by a programme of regional studies covering the economic, cultural, political and social background of the relevant countries, supplemented by a variety of optional units.

Liaison interpreting is used as a teaching exercise for all students and also features in other language-related courses such as the Postgraduate Diploma in Secretarial and European Language Studies. In the final year, students choose part of their programme from within a 'professional option', which includes specialization in either translating or conference interpreting. In the translation option, apart from being introduced to more complex and demanding material, they are able to study a further language such as Danish, Dutch, Italian or Portuguese with a view to attaining a level of knowledge that will serve as a useful additional career qualification. The interpreting option provides an 'initial training' in both consecutive and simultaneous modes.

Students spend their year abroad at various overseas universities with which exchange agreements are in operation. These include the Institut Supérieur d'Interprétariat et de Traduction (ISIT) in Paris and the Ecole de Traduction et d'Interprétation in Geneva.

Detailed statistics appear to have been kept on the career destinations of Ealing graduates. Of the 454 students who had graduated up to 1987, approximately 20% are described as working as full-time translators, some of these posts having been obtained immediately after graduation. While it is recognized that openings for interpreters are more limited, 3% of graduates (i.e. some 13 individuals) are said to have found posts 'within a year or two of graduation' (Languages Prospectus, 1987, pp. 12-17). This latter

qualification indicates that further training is likely to have been necessary .

The Ealing course evidently provides a useful springboard for students wishing to pursue careers as linguists, offering as it does an introduction to the specialized disciplines and the chance to acquire further languages. While the requirement - as opposed to the opportunity - to take one language *ab initio* may be seen as slightly curious, there is no doubting the usefulness of studying an extra language in the final year for translation purposes. By doing so, a student may well graduate with the ability to translate from four languages, perhaps in an unusual combination, thus making himself all the more attractive to employers. The high proportion of graduates said to be working as translators appears to testify to the effectiveness of this scheme. The average of less than one student per year going on to work as an interpreter (the course has been running since 1971) reflects the introductory nature of the interpreting option, but students do at least gain some exposure to the techniques involved and have an opportunity to assess their potential for the work.

The publicity material for the course presents a balanced view of its structure and content, emphasizing the philosophy of providing practical language training backed by general and specialized knowledge in relevant subject areas. The only criticism that could be levelled at the summary of career prospects is a slight coyness about the likely need for further training for work as a professional linguist.

4.1.1.5 University of East Anglia

The courses offered in the School of Modern Languages and European History allow for a wide range of subject combinations involving languages, history, area studies, linguistics and business studies. The languages taught at honours level are French, German, Danish, Norwegian and Swedish, with all these plus Italian, Russian and Spanish being offered at ancillary level. Of interest here are the single or double honours courses in Language and Linguistics involving French and/or German and the double honours course in Language with Interpreting and Translating available only in French and German. This latter course was only introduced in 1987, so no students have yet graduated from it.

Until the final year, these two programmes are extremely similar, consisting of core units in language and linguistics supplemented by minor subject courses chosen from a long list of options. Thereafter the difference is one of emphasis rather than substance. On returning from their year abroad, students following the Language and Linguistics course in French and/or German normally take as a two-term special subject either the theory and practice of translating or the theory and practice of interpreting in one language or the other. However, those studying Danish, Norwegian or Swedish in combination with French or German may opt instead to take a course in advanced translation and inter-language translation in the Scandinavian languages.

Over the same period, students following the Language with Interpreting and Translating programme will all take an advanced course in either interpreting or translation in both French and German. Since no final-year programme has yet been run, precise details of the syllabus remain unclear, but the assumption is that the classes provided will be the same as those for the Language and Linguistics courses, the difference being that students follow them in both languages instead of just one.

The final-year classes are seen as offering students the opportunity of going beyond the level of proficiency normally attained in a first degree course. The translation option involves work on specialist (though non-technical) texts, together with lectures and seminars on translation theory. The interpreting option offers training in basic interpreting skills such as aural comprehension, rapid note-taking, on-sight translation and consecutive and simultaneous interpreting. As regards the standard it is hoped to achieve, the course brochure issued by the School of Modern Languages and European History states that 'as it is not feasible to reach professional levels of proficiency in such a relatively short space of time, these final-year courses are designed as introductions to professional language work; nevertheless, the linguistic versatility and competence which talented and motivated students are able to develop on the basis of these courses does provide them with an extremely valuable first step towards a career in the various fields of professional language work'. In similar vein, the main university prospectus confirms the preliminary nature of the classes: 'A number of students who have

studied interpreting or translating have gained places on postgraduate courses leading to a professional qualification in these areas' (Undergraduate Prospectus for 1987 entry, p. 107). Interpreting and translation are not specifically mentioned in the School brochure as possible graduate careers.

It is clear from the above that the courses in question are hardly intended to prepare students for careers as professional linguists, but at most to enable them to identify their aptitudes and gain an initial acquaintance with the techniques involved. While it might be inappropriate to form a definitive judgment on a first degree course which has not yet run through its complete cycle, it is difficult to avoid the observation that for the moment its existence as a separate programme appears somewhat artificial. The title of the BA in Language with Interpreting and Translating, while not exactly a misnomer, catches the eye by referring to two disciplines which it is not even compulsory to take, since students can apparently choose between interpreting and translating in each language.

4.1.1.6 Oxford Polytechnic

While the modular degree courses in French and German are largely conventional in nature, incorporating substantial elements of literature or contemporary studies, the Polytechnic Diploma in Language Studies provides a broader programme of language training, within a framework of study of the social, economic, political and

cultural life of the relevant countries. It is a three-year full-time course in which all students take three languages, either two main and one subsidiary or vice versa. The main languages offered are French, German, Spanish and Italian, with all but French available at subsidiary level. Besides their final examinations at the polytechnic, students are required to sit appropriate examinations of the Institute of Linguists: at the end of the second year, the Intermediate Diploma in main languages and Grade II in subsidiaries; at the end of the third year, the Final Diploma in main languages and the Intermediate Diploma in subsidiaries. Apart from providing a valuable yardstick of linguistic ability, the IOL Final Diploma is recognized as degree-equivalent for certain purposes.

The teaching programme in main languages involves the use of liaison and consecutive interpreting as exercises designed to increase levels of linguistic competence. In the third year of the course, students have the opportunity of combining language study with an externally provided secretarial course; otherwise, they continue their language work and specialize in some area of contemporary studies, technical translation or general interpreting. The exact options available are described as depending on student demand and staff resources.

This course in applied languages is clearly designed to cater for students with a variety of career intentions. Those who display an aptitude for specialized translation or interpreting in their coursework over the first two years have the opportunity of

developing these skills in the final year of the course, even if the nature of such options and perhaps thus the standards involved are liable to vary. The linkage with the examinations structure of the Institute of Linguists is potentially useful for students seeking careers as professional linguists, with those who obtain the IOL Final Diploma having the same membership entitlements as full graduates. In this respect, it is interesting to note that the entry requirement for the diploma course is two A-levels normally of at least grade C, at least one being in an appropriate language, whereas the minimum grades likely to be required for admission to a degree course in modern languages are DDD or CC for French and CD for German.

4.1.1.7 University of Stirling

Of the three language degree courses available - in French, German and Spanish - only the French programme provides for an element of specialist training, in the form of an interpreting option available to honours degree students in the last two years of their four-year course. The syllabus as a whole combines traditional language and literature components with study of various aspects of contemporary France.

According to the university prospectus, the interpreting option 'provides an intensive grounding in the techniques of consecutive interpreting and enables the student to develop his proficiency to a high level' (Prospectus for 1987 entry, p. 67). A

separate brochure produced by the French Department further describes it as providing 'a foundation for later specialist training'.

This option is a good example of the inclusion of a potentially attractive feature in a mainstream undergraduate course without it receiving undue prominence. The objective descriptions attached to the option say precisely what it is intended to achieve, but do not emphasize possible career openings. The unstated but undoubtedly real virtue of such options lies in the fact that apart from enabling likely candidates for further training to be identified, they may place students who take them at an advantage over other applicants for specialist postgraduate courses, not because they are intellectually better equipped for the profession, but simply because they are already practised in the techniques involved and thus more likely to perform well in the various selection procedures they will encounter. It could also be surmised that if the merits of specialized options are not overstated, fewer unsuitable students will be attracted to them, with the general standard and consequent value of such options then being maintained at a correspondingly higher level.

4.1.1.8 Other options

The options covered in this section are specialized in the sense that they go beyond the usual level of undergraduate work in the disciplines concerned, but not to the extent of preparing

students for further training or professional careers - or at least claiming to do so - like those dealt with in the seven preceding sections.

At University College, Cardiff, the German degree course includes options in various aspects of translation, such as translation theory, business German, specialized German, and language and the media, the aim being to expose students to a range of different registers and to encourage a flexible approach. One of these options is taken in each of the last two years of the course.

The degree programme in French Studies at Portsmouth Polytechnic offers a final-year option in the theory and practice of translation. Earlier courses also included an option in interpreting, but this has now been dropped.

A similar final-year option, broadly titled 'Traduction', forms part of the French degree course at Roehampton Institute of Higher Education.

Lastly, students taking undergraduate programmes in Language and Linguistics at the University of York can select options in specialized translation from French, German or Swedish in the last two years of their course. These options are also required courses for students following degree programmes in English and a foreign language.

4.1.2 Courses involving specialist teaching exercises

This section deals with courses where interpreting and/or specialized translation work is used as a means of teaching languages and improving linguistic competence, as opposed to being intended as preliminary training in either discipline or as a first step towards a subsequent professional career. These teaching exercises are therefore normally part of the ordinary coursework, though occasionally they may only be employed in the context of a specific option. The 11 institutions at which such courses are offered are considered here in alphabetical order.

At Bristol Polytechnic, the BA courses in Modern Languages involving the study of two languages from French, German and Spanish entail an applied language syllabus which forms the core of students' language work. Classes taken in the first year include one in aural comprehension, but for the remainder of the course this is replaced by interpreting. As its place in the syllabus structure implies, this class is a language exercise designed to develop oral and aural skills. In the final year, all students take a course entitled 'Critique of Translation', a mixture of theory and practice which seeks to illustrate the difficulties encountered in the translation process and to examine the reasons for them.

It might at first sight seem somewhat invidious to place such a course in the category of those which merely involve teaching exercises in interpreting and translation rather than an element of specialist training. The reason for doing so, however, is clear:

the difference is between providing a class or exercise for all students over a considerable period, regardless of aptitude or ability for later specialization, and offering an option or compulsory unit in the final phase of a course - or possibly even a separate course as a variant of other programmes - which enables interested students who have the necessary aptitude to gain some experience of the professional fields involved, without placing others on the same or parallel courses at a disadvantage. Needless to say, this distinction is not an easy one for the uninformed potential applicant to make when comparing courses on the basis of the institutions' own descriptions.

At a number of institutions, interpreting and specialized translation exercises feature in the degree programmes in some languages, but not others. Such is the case at the University of Bristol, where only the Russian syllabus includes an element of interpreting practice.

Descriptions of the BA programme in Combined Studies at La Sainte Union College of Higher Education seem deliberately to avoid using the word 'interpreting' in the context of the Practical Language Skills course in French and German. This course, which runs throughout the three-year programme, includes 'oral translation into French of spoken English; oral translation into English of spoken French; oral summary in French of both spoken English and spoken French passages; oral summary in English of spoken French passages' (Prospectus for 1987 entry, p. 15 - applies also to German). The nature of the exercises could hardly be made plainer,

and describing them as interpreting would add only those connotations of the word which have previously been discussed. The term does appear, however, in descriptions of language work in the second and third years of the BA course in Modern Languages and European Studies, which is run jointly with Southampton Institute of Higher Education. The activities involved would appear to be largely similar.

An example of interpreting and translation exercises being contained within a specific option is provided by the final-year course entitled 'Communicative Skills' offered as part of honours degree programmes in French at the University of Liverpool. The aim here is to develop students' oral/aural proficiency through exercises which include liaison and consecutive interpreting, in the context of degree courses suitably balanced between language and literature.

An exercise described as 'consecutive translation' is used as a language teaching method in Spanish degree courses at the University of Nottingham. This forms part of a specially devised programme of language laboratory work and is intended to increase students' aural comprehension and speed of response. Interpreting is mentioned as a career to which graduates from Nottingham have subsequently proceeded.

The modern languages courses at the University of Salford were among the first non-traditional degree programmes set up in the early 1970s, concentrating on the acquisition of practical

linguistic skills and linking this with regional studies rather than literature. All students take two languages to degree level, those available being French, German, Italian and Spanish. The last two of these may be taken *ab initio*. It is also possible for students with A-level Spanish to combine this with Portuguese *ab initio* in addition to their second main language. In the first year of the course, all students have the opportunity of taking a third, subsidiary language, with Arabic, Dutch, Russian and Swedish being offered besides those languages already mentioned.

In the ninth, tenth and eleventh terms of the course, two hours per week for each language are devoted to classes in liaison interpreting. The nature of this exercise is fully explained in the prospectus, which goes on to state that: 'In our department interpreting is regarded both as a challenging and different method of teaching language and as a preparation for the kind of activity graduates might be asked to pursue in a professional situation' (Undergraduate Prospectus for 1987 entry, p. 130). As illustrated by a number of the career profiles of Salford graduates included in publicity material for the modern languages courses, the type of 'professional situation' envisaged here is that of the linguist working in a different field being called upon to act as an *ad hoc* interpreter, rather than a full-time interpreting career.

According to statistics quoted in the prospectus, 6% of modern languages graduates from Salford take up posts as translators in the UK, compared with a national average of below 1%. This implies an average of four graduates per year finding such employment, though

it is not clear whether further training is taken into account in the statistics. In any event, the claim is supported by a list of 59 named graduates from 1974 to 1984 who were initially employed in translating and/or interpreting in the UK or abroad, representing some five individuals per year.

The University of Sheffield provides a further example of a teaching method being used in only one of the language degree programmes, namely that in Russian, where 'simultaneous translation' is employed as a language laboratory exercise designed to develop oral competence.

In contrast, all the language programmes offered by South Bank Polytechnic - in French, German and Spanish - include the use of interpreting as a linguistic exercise.

The BSc course in Linguistic and International Studies offered by the University of Surrey provides another variant. It requires students to take one main language - French, German or Russian, the latter either as post A-level or *ab initio* - together with another of these languages or Swedish (with an introduction to Norwegian and Danish) as a subsidiary. In addition, all students must select either economics, international relations or law as the non-language element of their degree programme. These areas of special study are to some extent linked to the language-teaching side of the course; hence the German and Russian main language programmes incorporate classes in specialist translation within the relevant fields, dealing with legal and economic texts, international treaties and

the like. According to the university prospectus, 'a number of Surrey graduates also regularly become specialist translators' (Undergraduate Prospectus for 1987 entry, p. 104).

The university has a Centre for Translation and Language Studies which is discussed in the context of postgraduate training opportunities in section 4.3.2 below.

Lastly, the Department of Language and Linguistics at UMIST offers a BSc course in Computational Linguistics and Modern Languages which includes exercises in interpreting and summarizing as part of its final-year language work. Students take either French or German as their main language, with the other of these or Spanish as a subsidiary.

4.2 Heriot-Watt University

As indicated in section 4.1.1 above, the BA course in Languages (Interpreting and Translating) offered by Heriot-Watt University merits separate consideration on the grounds that it is the only established undergraduate programme in which training in the disciplines of interpreting and translation is not merely an option or a minor feature of the course, but carries the same weight as study of the various languages involved, the contemporary background of the relevant countries and international affairs. The course is analysed here in the same way as the specialist postgraduate courses dealt with in Chapter Five.

4.2.1 Course aims and background

The Department of Languages was set up in 1968, two years after the foundation of the university. It was initially a service department, providing subsidiary courses and language tuition for students from other subject areas. In 1970, however, the current degree course was launched, producing its first graduates four years later.

The aims of the course are described as: 'the mastery of the contemporary spoken and written language in a number of fields of a general and specialized nature; the development of the special skills of translating and interpreting, backed by a theoretical appreciation of the problems involved; a thorough acquaintance with

the contemporary scene and the background of the countries whose languages are being studied; a sound understanding of the structures and functions of European and international organizations' (Undergraduate Prospectus for 1987 entry, p. 100). As these aims suggest, the course is perceived by those who run it as a vocational one that will equip its students to find employment not only as translators or interpreters, but also in a variety of other occupations where there is a need for highly competent and well-informed linguists, for example in international bodies, industry and commerce, journalism and broadcasting. At the same time, it is recognized that there will always be a range of achievement among students taking the course, with only the very best being suitable for immediate employment as professional linguists, perhaps two or three individuals per year.

The course was originally designed with an optimum annual intake of 30 students in mind and ran at this level until the early 1980s, when cutbacks in funding led to a ceiling of 25 being imposed. In conjunction with the relocation of the department to the new university campus, however, the intake is currently being increased to around 40 students per year.

All students take two languages throughout the course and to the same level; those available are French, German, Russian and Spanish. With the structure of language teaching in schools determining the spread of applications over the four languages offered, it is hardly surprising that more than 90% of applicants wish to take French and around 60% German, so that there will always

be a substantial proportion of students on the course combining those two languages. While there are no quotas as such, some effort has had to be made over the years to maintain viable groups of students taking combinations involving the languages less commonly taught in schools. Thus whereas a Higher grade or A-level pass was initially required for all languages, dwindling numbers of applications for places to study Russian in the early 1980s forced the introduction of an *ab initio* scheme for that language in 1985. It is therefore necessary for the department to balance the need to form language teaching groups of an appropriate size against the requirement not to admit poorly qualified students to the course.

The problem with this arrangement is that if a certain number of places have to be filled each year with students taking a specific language combination for which relatively few candidates apply, there is always liable to be a dilution in the quality of the intake compared with popular combinations which are heavily oversubscribed. In other words, it can become easier to gain a place on the course to read French and Russian rather than French and German, for example. Hitherto, there has apparently not been such a dearth of suitably qualified applicants as to cause an appreciable disparity of standards, but the suggestion is that organizational constraints could ultimately take precedence over ideals of quality. The decision to offer Russian *ab initio* is illustrative of this tendency: the measure may have been needed to maintain the language as a component of the degree programme in its present form, with all the implications in terms of staffing and resources, but could be seen as undermining the quality of the

course as a whole, since it is questionable whether students can achieve the same level of proficiency as in their other language, or indeed as students who already have A-level Russian. This consideration applies particularly to a course in which much emphasis is placed on the difficult discipline of interpreting. There is simply not the administrative flexibility, however, to adjust the language combinations offered from year to year according to the quality and spread of applications.

4.2.2 Selection procedures

As with all first degree courses at UK universities, applications from prospective students are channelled through the UCCA clearing system. In the first few years of the course, the number of applications was around 500, but it has since levelled off to an average of 350 or so per year. Hence there have generally been 12 to 15 candidates for each place available on the course.

Until the UCCA procedures were modified in 1989, the first means employed by the Admissions Officer to reduce this number of applicants to a manageable level was to discount automatically all those who had not put the course at the top of their list of preferences. This sometimes amounted to 50% of applications received. Potential applicants were warned that this system was in operation in a letter on admissions policy sent out routinely with prospectuses. Since candidates no longer indicate an order of preference, however, reliance has had to be placed on

recommendations and the results of examinations in drawing up a short-list of around 100 candidates to be called for interview. The grades normally looked for are 'A' passes in the two languages to be studied plus a good range of other passes at Scottish Higher level, or 'B' passes in the two languages plus a 'C' in another subject at GCE A-level. No offers of places are made without an interview, this being seen as the only way of effectively ensuring candidates' suitability for the course.

Interviews are conducted on the basis of an established procedure whereby the conversation is structured to a sufficient extent to provide a uniform method of assessment, but without a rigid framework being imposed. Two members of staff are always present. The first criterion applied is that of motivation: is the applicant genuinely interested in this particular course, or merely looking for a non-literary degree in general? The second major consideration is candidates' ability to express themselves well in English - to speak clearly, respond quickly, deal with abstract concepts and put forward coherent arguments. The aim is to oblige applicants to think on their feet in a way that will enable the interviewers to gauge their likely aptitude for the interpreting element of the course. Thirdly, an assessment is made of candidates' interest in current affairs, with enquiries concerning reading habits leading on to a discussion of some topical issue, not necessarily related to the countries whose languages are to be studied. There are no written tests nor, perhaps surprisingly, any assessment of candidates' use of the foreign languages. It is felt by the course authorities that the additional stress of an oral

examination would be unhelpful in the context of the interview, and that language performance can be established in other ways.

Once the interview procedure has been completed, offers of places are made in the usual way through UCCA, with the considerations regarding language combinations discussed in the preceding section naturally coming into play.

4.2.3 Course content and methodology

4.2.3.1 General structure

Throughout the first year, five hours of classes per week are devoted to each language studied. While there may be slight variations between languages, these normally break down into one hour each for translation from and into the foreign language, oral practice, liaison interpreting and an introduction to consecutive work.

In the first two terms, students take one class per week in the modern history of each country whose language is being studied. In the third term, these are replaced by a common course entitled 'European Political Ideologies', which serves as a preparation for the second-year class in European studies. Similarly, a class in phonetics is run in the third term as preparation for the general linguistics class in the second year.

Lastly, all students except those taking Russian *ab initio* choose an 'elective' or optional subject from a list of courses offered by other departments within the Faculty of Economic and Social Studies and thus not involving the use of foreign languages. Topics include accounting, industrial relations, production management and statistics. These classes, which are offered subject to availability and timetable constraints, take up a further four hours per week.

The pattern of language study continues virtually unchanged in the second year, with some reorganization of the classes in interpreting to accommodate the introduction of simultaneous work. The courses in European studies and general linguistics mentioned above take up two hours and one hour respectively per week. Once again, all students except beginners in Russian are required to choose an elective class, but in the second year this may be a course in a third foreign language, those available being Danish, French, German, Italian and Spanish. These classes provide an excellent opportunity to acquire a further language for translation purposes, but a potential drawback is that they are open to non-linguists from other departments, a situation which is liable to slow the rate of progress.

In the third year, each student spends a five-month period in both language areas attached to an appropriate university department. Overseas students come to Edinburgh on an exchange basis and participate in the course programme. A dissertation has to be produced in each language and handed in by the beginning of

the final year of the course. These dissertations are intended to cover practical aspects of the two foreign languages which students have encountered during their time abroad, rather than more general topics which could be researched anywhere.

The number of hours devoted to work in each language increases to six per week in the fourth year of the course, with separate classes in consecutive and simultaneous interpreting, two hours of other oral work and two hours of translation classes. The only other coursework in this final year is a one-hour weekly class in 'International Organizations and Economy'.

4.2.3.2 Translation

As indicated above, translation activities account for some four hours of classes per week throughout the course. While work into the foreign languages is seen largely as a teaching exercise designed to develop competence in use of the written language, translation into English is treated on a broader basis as a means of acquainting students with a variety of fields of terminology and developing techniques for handling different types of material.

With a view to harmonizing as far as possible the fields covered by students taking different language combinations, a system of topics has been devised whereby certain periods of the course are linked to specific subject areas. During these periods, relevant material is used in all language classes, both in translation and

interpreting. While it would not be possible, because of the variety of subjects involved, to gear the programme of topics to the elective classes available in the first two years of the course, a deliberate attempt is made to provide some degree of parallelism. Hence the list of topics includes such themes as economics, industrial relations, legal systems, pressure groups and international organizations.

These topics are not, of course, particularly specialized in nature; it is not the intention to train students in translating highly technical material, the view being taken that it would be inappropriate to concentrate in depth on any individual area. Nevertheless, students are made aware of the approach which is needed to tackle such work, partly through the occasional exercise in normal classes and partly through seminars or workshops held by visiting professionals. The texts used in coursework are drawn predominantly from the press; literary material is specifically avoided.

A point is made of keeping language classes to a manageable size. The French group, which is inevitably the largest, is thus frequently split into two.

The second term of the general linguistics course in the second year is devoted exclusively to the theory of translation, with students carrying out a project on this subject during the following term. This is seen as important not only as an adjunct to

students' translation work, but also as an academic exercise in its own right.

4.2.3.3 Interpreting

The first-year classes in interpreting begin with exercises in message extraction designed to develop students' listening skills and short-term memory capabilities, as well as their confidence in oral delivery. A typical format would be for a short text to be read out and an immediate summary given by a student. Initially, there is no taking of notes and all the material is in English; the texts used are gradually increased in difficulty and length to the point where students are ready to start working from foreign-language sources. As part of this process, some exercises use dialect English as a source language to accustom students to the new techniques of listening involved.

In the second term, students begin to practise note-taking in preparation for consecutive work. No particular system is imposed, and individuals are left to evolve the method which suits them best, although as a general principle it is emphasized that notes should be kept to a minimum and greater reliance placed on short-term memory. Once again, such exercises at first use English source material. At the same time, however, a start is made on liaison interpreting, an activity in which students work both from and into their foreign languages. Consecutive interpreting is introduced in the third term, by the end of which students should be capable of

dealing with short passages lasting about two minutes. As a preliminary to simultaneous work, students practice oral translation exercises in a language laboratory.

At the end of their first year, students sit a test on their interpreting work which they are required to pass in order to proceed with the course. It must be borne in mind that as first-year undergraduates, students are still being taught their foreign languages as well as the new skills involved in interpreting. Moreover, the absence of detailed screening during the selection procedure means that there is always a wide range of ability in this discipline. The test is simply intended to identify those students who are unlikely to cope with the interpreting elements in the remainder of the course, which become increasingly demanding. As a rule, one or two students leave the course each year, either by their own decision or as a result of the test, which may in any case merely confirm their personal impressions.

In the second year, simultaneous and consecutive interpreting are practised in the same class, with the second hour of interpreting coursework being devoted to liaison activities. Like the translation programmes discussed above, interpreting classes are covered by the topic system, and emphasis is placed on the need for students to prepare the relevant areas of terminology in advance and, where possible, to obtain the necessary documentation. The material used is prepared in collaboration with native speakers and always delivered by the latter, either in person or on tape. Videotapes are used on occasion to simulate authentic delivery. By

the end of the second year, students are expected to be able to deal with speeches lasting six to eight minutes in both consecutive and simultaneous modes.

Separate classes are held in consecutive and simultaneous work in the final year of the course, with the level of difficulty of the material used being progressively increased. It is felt, however, that authentic speeches taken from the proceedings of actual meetings (such as debates in the European Parliament, for example) present too many difficulties for general use and can be handled only by the most able students, who have access to such material for practice in their own time. Nevertheless, a feature of the final phase of the course is the organization of multilingual debates in the university's conference theatre which provide students with an opportunity to test their skills in public - literally so, since the events are advertised and open to anyone interested in attending.

These debates are carefully structured: a motion is proposed in a foreign language by a native speaker, then other native speakers of the four languages taught on the course and an English guest speaker each deliver prepared speeches lasting five or six minutes. It is indicated in advance which of these contributions will support the motion and which will oppose it. There then follows a question and answer session of about 40 minutes in which members of the audience are invited to participate. Finally, one speaker sums up for each side and a vote is taken. The proceedings are normally chaired by an English speaker, and it is assumed that all the participants understand English. Contributors to the debate

are warned by a flashing light if they are speaking too quickly for the interpreters.

Students are divided into four booth teams and a rota drawn up for the interpretation of the prepared speeches into English. This arrangement means that four students will be working at the same time on any one foreign-language contribution. For the question and answer session, each booth is allocated a foreign language and one student is responsible for interpreting from English into the appropriate language. Students' performances are recorded and subsequently analysed in class.

Apart from engaging in realistic practice of this kind and pursuing their normal coursework, final-year students in particular benefit from occasional visits by professional interpreters who hold a series of classes over a short period. Students are also encouraged to practise in their own time, but as indicated in the following section, there has in the past been considerable pressure on resources which has tended to make such activities difficult to arrange.

4.2.4 Staff and resources

All the staff in the department have acquired a certain familiarity with the techniques of interpreting and translation, the course under discussion having long been the sole full-time language programme taught at Heriot-Watt. Only one has had professional

experience, however, having previously worked as a freelance interpreter based in Brussels.

The standard of resources available has improved substantially with the relocation of the department to the new university campus on the outskirts of Edinburgh. The old ten-booth interpreting studio has been replaced by a facility that will accommodate up to 41 students and the language laboratory equipment has been similarly upgraded. This has eased the strain on resources to a considerable degree: with the facilities in the previous premises being used intensively for scheduled teaching work, there had been some competition amongst students for access at other times for practice. The library of taped and other material can now be more fully exploited.

The growing importance of word-processing skills has been recognized and equipment is available in the department for students to use.

4.2.5 Practical experience

Given the highly structured nature of the course, there is little scope for providing students with practical experience of working in a professional environment, even if such contact might be seen as beneficial. During the year spent abroad, students normally follow courses provided by their host institutions and are not attached to outside organizations.

Nevertheless, the department has established links with various employers of professional linguists over the years, not least through the achievements of its own graduates, and efforts are made to arrange traineeships for suitable candidates after they have completed the course. In career terms, temporary employment of this kind has often proved a useful first step.

4.2.6 Assessment

Students' work in each year of the course counts towards their final degree result, though most weight attaches to their performance in the examinations held at the end of the course. Assessment is carried out on the basis of everyday coursework, essays linked to specific classes and formal tests and examinations. Consistently unsatisfactory performance is apt to result in the exclusion of a student from the course during the first or second year, a consequence of which has been that no student who has reached the end of the programme has ever failed to be awarded a degree. The system is flexible enough, however, to allow the element of continuous assessment to operate in favour of a student who performs unexpectedly poorly on the day of an examination. This is of course particularly relevant to the interpreting tests, where the pressure on students is likely to be greater than on other occasions. However, an adjustment of this kind is only made if the effect will be to improve the final mark: a student who performs unexpectedly well in an interpreting test is not marked down because his coursework has been less impressive.

There is a similar element of flexibility in cases where a student performs poorly in one area of work in the final year. For example, a student who had just passed the interpreting tests in the first and second years but then failed the final examination could still obtain his degree, provided of course that his work in other fields was satisfactory. Nevertheless, the aim is to avoid such situations by screening out likely failures at an earlier stage of the course. It goes without saying that references supplied for graduates by the department reflect the differing levels of their performance.

The language examinations at the end of the course consist of two written papers involving translation from and into each foreign language and a series of oral tests. The use of dictionaries and other works of reference is not allowed. As a rule, the subject-matter is linked to the topics dealt with in coursework during the final year. External examiners contribute to the assessment and also mark the dissertations prepared by students during their year abroad. These examiners are normally academics with appropriate expertise from other universities rather than practising interpreters or translators.

Students are tested in liaison, consecutive and simultaneous interpreting from each language and in their oral skills in the foreign language itself, each element carrying equal weight for the purposes of assessment. In the overall scheme of marking, the final examinations in interpreting account for 18% of total marks for the degree and those in translation for 30%.

4.2.7 Links with employers

As indicated in the section dealing with practical experience, the department does maintain contacts with employers of professional linguists with a view to arranging traineeships or other forms of temporary employment for students after they have completed the course. Such contacts tend to be with international bodies such as the European Community institutions rather than with industry or commerce.

While it is obviously in the interest of the department for its graduates to have a good record in finding employment, there is not the same pressure to demonstrate success in a specific field as for the specialist postgraduate courses, whose objectives are in any case not the same and which are funded and organized on a different basis. It must also be borne in mind that only a small proportion of Heriot-Watt graduates are regarded as capable of finding immediate employment as linguists and that the majority will either go on to further training or take jobs which involve other elements besides the active use of languages. In this context, facilitating the career progress of the most talented would-be interpreters and translators is a relatively minor concern, although it does of course provide scope for enhancing the reputation of the department as a whole.

4.2.8 Statistics and student feedback

Although the department does endeavour to monitor the early stages of its graduates' careers, the information available can only be described as patchy. As a result of enquiries made during the present study, a document was produced showing the first destinations of 125 students who graduated between 1974 and 1980, representing approximately 60% of the total.

Twenty of these former students went on to postgraduate study, which in six cases did not involve languages. Of the 105 who entered employment, only 17 took jobs in which no use was made of their language ability. A total of 12 graduates found posts with international organizations and six more with foreign governments, though the table does not reveal how many of these were employed specifically as linguists. Five graduates are listed as working as freelance interpreters or translators. The largest number of former students - 28 individuals - found work in the general area of language teaching, half of these on a temporary basis.

The complete list of initial destinations can be found in Appendix VII.

Questionnaires were completed by six of the 19 students who graduated in 1987. While the size of this group does not allow any general conclusions to be drawn, some of the views expressed are nevertheless of interest.

Four of the students had been advised to apply for the course by staff at their schools; the other two had themselves searched through university prospectuses to find the course that would suit them best. In all but one case, the interpreting and translation elements had been a decisive factor in the students' choice of course. The sixth individual was seeking rather to avoid studying literature (but presumably did not say so at the interview).

All but one of the students thought that the course had equipped them for employment as professional linguists, though two felt they needed further training in interpreting. However, only three hoped ultimately to be able to earn a living solely from interpreting and/or translation.

A generally favourable view of the course was expressed by all the students. Two main points emerged from their comments: there was some demand for more translation classes dealing with technical material, and a feeling that not enough consideration was given to the needs of those students taking Russian.

4.3 Postgraduate training opportunities

With the single exception of the undergraduate programme at Heriot-Watt University, none of the first-degree courses available in the United Kingdom can be said to prepare students systematically for immediate employment as professional interpreters or translators. On the other hand, several of the courses referred to in section 4.1 above contain elements that provide students with an introduction to the disciplines concerned and could pave the way for further training.

In the survey carried out of the possibilities which exist in the United Kingdom for students to receive this kind of specialized training at postgraduate level, five courses were identified as fulfilling the essential requirement of preparing UK graduates for direct entry into one or other of the professions. These are the combined courses in interpreting and translation at the Universities of Bath and Bradford, the separate courses in the two disciplines at the Polytechnic of Central London, and the course in translation only at the University of Kent. Chapter Five of this thesis contains a detailed analysis and comparison of these five courses.

Two other courses were identified as being of interest: the modular master's programme available at the University of Salford, which covers both interpreting and translation, and the Diploma/MA in Translation at the University of Surrey. These are described in sections 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 below, where an account is given of the

reasons why they have not been grouped with the five other courses in the same field.

It is necessary at this point to mention certain types of training or qualification which have been excluded from the present study. Firstly, it was felt that the various courses available in interpreting and/or translation from and into Arabic lay outside the scope of this research. Such courses are offered by PCL and the Universities of Bath and Salford, amongst others, and while sometimes nominally open to students of English mother tongue are in practice designed for Arabic native speakers. Apart from the distinct shortage of home students with the necessary level of competence in Arabic, the costs involved and the non-availability of financial support would appear to act as a deterrent for UK-based applicants. The growth in the number of courses of this kind in the 1980s reflects a need on the part of higher education institutions to generate income by setting up courses that are entirely self-financing. The same applies to courses specifically intended for students who are not native speakers of English or are not UK-based, such as the two-year MA in Translation and Interpreting offered by the University of Salford either for students with a degree in English whose working language is French, Spanish or Portuguese, or for African students whose official language is English and who have a degree in French.

Also excluded are those courses which are not designed to equip participants with a qualification likely to provide the foundation for a subsequent career as a full-time professional

linguist. This covers the masters' degrees in literary translation offered by the Universities of Warwick and Essex, refresher courses for practising linguists such as those organized from time to time at PCL, and short programmes such as the two-week intensive course in simultaneous conference interpretation run each year by the Cambridge Centre for Languages.

Secondly, there has been no detailed consideration of the programmes offered by the London School of Translators and Interpreters, a private organization which runs a one-year course in Commercial Translation and a 22-week course in Commercial Interpreting, besides others in Commercial Correspondence and English for Commerce. These programmes lead to diplomas awarded jointly by the school and the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry and are available in Arabic, French, German, Italian and Spanish in combination with English; tuition in other languages can be arranged. Leaving aside all questions of entrance qualifications and the standards achieved by students taking these courses, the main emphasis is once again on enrolments from overseas, a fact perhaps reflected in the lack of awareness of these programmes in UK professional circles.

Lastly, no account has been taken of the syllabuses leading to qualifications awarded by professional bodies such as the Diploma in Translation of the Institute of Linguists. These were felt to be qualifications designed to enhance an individual's career profile rather than a systematic form of training for a particular profession.

4.3.1 University of Salford

From 1979 to 1981, the University of Salford ran an MA course in Advanced Language Studies which provided training in both interpreting and translation for UK graduates. This course fell victim to the substantial cuts in university funding in 1981, however, in the wake of which a number of self-financing postgraduate courses covering the same fields and principally designed for overseas students were established within the Department of Modern Languages. As explained in the previous section, these courses lie outside the scope of this research.

The university subsequently set up a modular master's degree scheme which enables candidates to study for a postgraduate degree by attending a series of courses over a period of time and thus accumulating 'credits', and by writing a dissertation. Each course, or module, is essentially separate (though several may be linked together), allowing each student considerable flexibility in compiling his own programme of study. Typically, a course might consist of six modules each with a credit value of six, plus a dissertation with a credit value of 12, making a total of 48 credits needed for the degree. Some modules carry a lower or higher credit value, however, and the dissertation may also carry a higher rating.

Some 165 modules are offered by departments across the university. The Department of Modern Languages participates in the scheme by teaching around 35 modules, including four in interpreting and five in translation. Apart from being able to compose their own

individual degree programmes, students have the opportunity of choosing a specified group of modules and presenting a dissertation on a related topic so as to qualify for a named degree within the master's programme. One such degree is a revised version of the MA in Advanced Language Studies, which specifies various combinations of interpreting, translation and linguistics modules in two of French, German and Spanish. Similarly, the MSc in Marketing and a Foreign Language requires students to take at least one module in interpreting and another in translation.

At the core of the programme for the MA in Advanced Language Studies are separate modules in interpreting and advanced translation for each of the three languages offered. Those in interpreting are divided equally between consecutive and liaison work, while those in translation deal with non-literary texts of a general and specialized nature, with slight variations between languages. Students are required to select either one translation and one interpreting module from each of two languages, giving them 24 credits, or two translation modules in separate languages plus one interpreting module from one of those languages, giving them 18 credits. To build up the total of 36 credits needed for the degree, students then choose further modules from a specified list of seven, although the possibility does exist of replacing some of these with approved modules in associated fields worth up to six credits.

The seven specified modules are the following: theory and practice of translation; simultaneous interpreting; lexicography; extended translation; language studies and linguistics; introductory

linguistics; general stylistics. The extended translation module involves the translation and bilingual glossing of a passage of around 5,000 words from French, German or Spanish. In the module in simultaneous interpreting, students are required to work from two of those languages. Except for the module in introductory linguistics, which carries a credit value of six, all these complementary modules are worth three credits.

Each module has its own entry requirement, in practice a good honours degree in an appropriate subject or relevant training and/or experience. In addition however, applicants for translating and interpreting modules are all interviewed and given aptitude tests to determine their suitability for the programmes. These tests consist of three elements: an off-the-cuff speech lasting about two minutes which has to be delivered first in the relevant foreign language and then immediately afterwards in English on a topic communicated to the applicant shortly beforehand; a test resembling an exercise in consecutive interpreting, in which the applicant takes notes while listening to a short speech in the foreign language and then attempts to give it back in English; a written translation into English of a non-literary text. There is no formal system for marking these exercises - it is left to the tutor responsible for each module to decide in each case whether a candidate is suitable for admission.

The MA in Advanced Language Studies can be taken on a full-time basis in one academic year or on a part-time basis over a period of up to five years. Apart from the absence of bursaries or

grants, a potential obstacle to full-time attendance is the fact that interpreting modules are only deemed viable if six students are enrolled; otherwise they are withdrawn from the programme. Since the modular scheme began in 1981, an average of around ten students have enrolled each year, almost exclusively on a part-time basis. The teaching programme is designed to accommodate students who have jobs, with classes taking place in the late afternoon or evening, and many of those enrolled are graduates working locally who are seeking an additional qualification.

An examination of the aims of the individual modules reveals why the Salford programme has not been included among the specialist postgraduate courses analysed in detail in this study. The module in French interpreting, like its counterparts in German and Spanish, 'aims to provide students with an opportunity to improve their oral fluency in the foreign language and in their mother tongue, and to introduce them to the practical and theoretical problems of interpreting. While not being a training course for professional interpreters, the module will nevertheless enable those with an aptitude for interpreting to make the most of their abilities, and, in improving language skills, will enhance the possibility of careers in industry and commerce, the civil service, teaching, journalism and the media' (Modular Master's Degree and Modular Diploma Handbook, 1984, p. 77). Likewise, the description of the module in simultaneous interpreting states that: 'This module does not claim to equip students for *immediate* employment as conference interpreters. It is envisaged that completion of the module will give students a very clear idea of their aptitude and liking for

this activity. Those wishing to pursue a career as a professional interpreter at a later date will find the module a very useful basis from which to embark upon any full-time short course of professional training as conference interpreters. It will also give others a valuable skill in functions where spontaneous, informal interpreting might be necessary' (ibid., p. 81).

While the modules in advanced translation undoubtedly serve to improve students' practical skills by exposing them to a wide range of non-literary texts, these too do not claim to prepare students for careers as professional linguists. In these circumstances, and given the fact that students are likely to spread their taking of modules over a number of years, it is hardly surprising that no special links are maintained with potential employers and no particular records kept of students' subsequent careers.

As shown by the proliferation of courses involving interpreting and translation for overseas students and the inclusion of interpreting techniques in undergraduate programmes, there remains a considerable interest and expertise in these activities at Salford. As far as UK students are concerned, however, it is difficult to see what the modular MA programme has to offer the graduate who is seriously interested in pursuing a career as a professional linguist. Its role of enabling students to determine their aptitudes and interests is duplicated by a number of first degree courses, and the time it would take to obtain the final qualification could surely be better spent on a more intensive and more professionally oriented postgraduate scheme.

4.3.2 University of Surrey

The Postgraduate Diploma/MA in Translation is a one-year full-time course in which students specialize in translation from one of French, German, Norwegian or Swedish into English. The course has been running since 1984, with some variations in syllabus, under the aegis of the Centre for Translation and Language Studies. Entry is open to students of English mother tongue with a degree in one of these foreign languages, at least upper second-class standard normally being required, and to students whose mother tongue is one of the foreign languages holding an equivalent qualification in English. There are no DES bursaries or other specially earmarked funds available for UK students, though some Local Education Authorities have in the past made discretionary awards.

The university prospectus describes the course as aiming to provide a thorough introductory training for graduates who wish to become professional translators. The following more detailed definition is given in literature produced by the Department of Linguistic and International Studies:

'The aims of the course are:

- (a) to train students in the practice of translation and to bring them to a high standard of translation (*sic*);

- (b) to give them appropriate understanding of selected areas in the social sciences and in technology, together with their special language registers;
- (c) to introduce them to terminology studies;
- (d) to introduce them to current theories of translation and related aspects of linguistics, with particular emphasis on translation methods and procedures;
- (e) to introduce them to the application of computers to translation and terminology'

(Departmental document on the Postgraduate Diploma/MA in Translation, no date).

The number of students admitted to the course each year generally lies between 25 and 30, the latter being the target figure. Typically, the intake splits into three groups with more or less equal numbers of students: the French group, consisting mostly of UK graduates, but with some West African students from countries such as Zaïre and Cameroon; the German group, in which non-UK graduates are rare; a Norwegian/Swedish group consisting entirely of students from Scandinavia.

The course is not advertised in the press, but details are included in guides to postgraduate study available through UK careers offices. A network of contacts exists with overseas

universities, particularly in Scandinavia, which provides a supply of foreign-language candidates. Between 80 and 100 applications for the course are received each year. References are taken up systematically and indeed provide almost the sole criterion for admission, since there is no testing of linguistic competence or aptitude for a career as a translator and only those suitable candidates based within a 100-mile radius of Guildford are invited to attend for interview.

There are four principal fields of study: translation practice, specialist subject areas, terminology and approaches to translation. The classes in translation practice, which amount to six contact hours per week throughout the course, are linked thematically to the work on specialized topics. This extends over two terms, and in the first consists of an introduction to the areas of economics, politics and electro-mechanical technology in three one-hour weekly classes. In the last of these sectors, consideration of the background principles involved continues through the second term; in the two others, the emphasis is shifted towards problems of terminology.

The classes in terminology as such account for one contact hour per week and deal in particular with comparative and theoretical terminology, lexicography and term banks. In the final term, they take the form of an introduction to developing computerized term banks and glossaries. The series of classes entitled 'Approaches to Translation', running for one hour a week in

the first and second terms, covers a wide variety of topics connected with the theory of translation.

In addition to these four core elements, there is a class in stylistics in the first term of the course lasting one hour per week. Also in the first term, students are given a short course in word-processing techniques, followed in the second by an introduction to computerized aids to translation, including a machine-translation system. For students in the group working from French to English, an option in interpreting is available in all three terms taking up a further two hours per week.

During their second term, students select a passage of around 1,500 words to translate in one of the three specialized areas referred to above. This extended translation and an accompanying commentary are submitted for assessment early in the third term.

While the majority of the classes in practical translation are taught by members of the university staff, part-time teachers with relevant expertise are used for some elements of the course, notably the translation theory classes and the interpreting option. For the latter, a three-booth interpreting facility is available.

Assessment is based on five elements: one continuous, three involving examinations at the end of the course and the extended translation. For the continuous part, candidates submit a dossier of their 20 best translations of the year, including a minimum of six from each specialized subject area. The average mark for these

is then calculated as a percentage. There are also 100 marks available in two of the examinations, involving three-hour papers in terminology and approaches to translation, and for the extended translation. The third examination, also lasting three hours, consists of translations in each of the specialized areas of terminology and carries 100 marks for each passage. This produces a total of 700 available marks; the interpreting option is not examined. The diploma is awarded to candidates who score 40% or more overall, i.e. at least 280 marks. Those who achieve an aggregate of 50% or more may, if they wish, proceed to the MA by one of three routes: researching a topic related to translation, executing and commenting on a translation, or developing a glossary with commentary in a specific area of terminology. Whichever method is chosen, this project is required to be around 10,000 words in length and must be submitted by the end of the September following completion of the taught course. The pass-mark for the project is 50%.

There are two main reasons why this postgraduate course in translation has not been classified as a specialist one for the purposes of the present study. Firstly, the selection procedure contains no aptitude tests and does not even allow for all potentially suitable applicants to be called for interview. The mere fact of whether or not candidates actually attend for interview has been described by the Course Convenor as a test of their seriousness in applying for the course; it could perhaps be surmised that the care with which an institution selects students for

specialist training can be taken as a measure of the seriousness of the course involved.

Secondly, it is a fundamental weakness from the point of view of career preparation that students only translate from one foreign language into English. The demand for translators working only from German is very limited, for those working only from French virtually non-existent. This fact is reflected in students' record in finding employment after the course. A reasonable number of those working from German have succeeded in finding posts based in German-speaking countries by taking advantage of contacts made in the well-developed scheme of industrial placements for students on undergraduate courses. Those translating from French, however, have had little success on the employment market and have often moved into other sectors such as teaching English as a foreign language. There are no arrangements for placing postgraduate students abroad either during or after their course.

There must also be several question marks against the role of the option in interpreting. While it may be of some use as a language-teaching technique, such an activity seems out of place in a course which focuses on translation and terminology. Leaving aside the questionable value of providing such tuition in only one language pair for two hours per week, it appears strange not to make the option available to those working from other languages. Moreover, there is no screening to determine which students would be most suitable for such training. If, as may perhaps be the case, the facility has been provided for those francophone students

wishing to obtain further practice in oral work, surely it would be more transparent to say so directly, rather than implying that interpreting is an integral feature of the course.

4.3.3 Research

While all the higher education institutions referred to in this chapter are involved in some way in the teaching of interpreting and/or translation and therefore have a general interest in the field, only five of those surveyed specifically mentioned one or other discipline among their research interests. The list which follows is of course purely indicative, since research is often pursued by individual students or academics outside a departmental framework.

Aston University refers in its postgraduate prospectus to research interests in professional translation from French and German and in machine translation; the German Department at University College, Cardiff includes 'Translation Studies' among its particular interests; a research project in the field of the theory and practice of translation is described as currently under way in the French Department at the University of Keele; a general research interest in translating and interpreting exists in the French Department at Queen Mary College, London; at UMIST, attention is focused on machine translation and term bank compilation.

CHAPTER FIVE

SPECIALIST COURSES

The aim of this chapter is to describe and compare the various courses whose purpose is to prepare students for careers as professional linguists. Details are first given of each course in turn, following the same general pattern. Certain aspects of the content and organization of the courses are then contrasted and discussed.

* * *

5.1 University of Bath

5.1.1 Course aims and background

The Postgraduate Diploma in Language Studies course, introduced in 1966, is a one-year full-time course designed to prepare graduates for careers as interpreters or translators in international organizations.

Candidates for the course must offer French together with German, Italian or Russian. Until 1987, it was also possible to offer Spanish, but this language has subsequently been dropped. Not all these combinations of languages are included in the course every

year; although German would normally be available, owing to the relatively high number of candidates offering the language, the others may be 'rested' from year to year either because of internal departmental pressures of work or simply because it is felt that the quality of applicants is not sufficiently high to warrant including a particular language. The standard required in each language is the same, i.e. honours degree level proficiency. The quality of candidates is in fact the dominant factor here: while some account is taken of market forces - it would simply not be feasible to take on seven or eight candidates offering French and Italian, for example - the demand for particular language combinations is seen as unpredictable and short-term. The view is taken that it is preferable to turn out potential professional linguists of high ability, even if in the most competitive language sectors, rather than to react constantly to fluctuating demand.

Given the small numbers of students admitted to the course, this preference for quality over particular combinations is perhaps understandable. While the largest course was 15 students in the year of the United Kingdom's accession to the European Community, the size of intake is determined by the number of DES bursaries available and the number of students of a sufficiently high standard able to finance themselves from other sources. The DES bursaries allocated to Bath have steadily declined in number; as far as recent years are concerned, there were nine in 1986-87, eight in 1987-88 and 1988-89, and only seven in 1989-90, so that the number of students attending the course has fluctuated between seven and eleven.

5.1.2 Selection procedures

The course is advertised in the national press and details are naturally available from university and polytechnic careers advice offices. The number of applications has remained fairly steady over the past five years at between 100 and 140. Of these, between 60 and 80 will be from candidates offering French and German, with the other language combinations attracting some 20 to 30 applications. Since the likely breakdown between the four possible combinations will be four places for German and two each for two other languages, with the fourth option not being included, it will be seen that the ratio of places to applicants may be as low as 1 to 20 for German but only 1 to 12 for the other languages.

When applications are received, references are taken up on all candidates and an initial selection made of those to be invited for interview and tests. This screening is coordinated by the course director, who is also responsible for French, with the participation of course tutors for the other languages. If both assessors decide that a candidate merits further consideration, he is invited for interview. There is no special form for references; a standard letter is sent out together with a copy of the course prospectus and the referee asked to supply detailed comments on the applicant's linguistic proficiency and ability to write and speak good English. The references thus obtained are indeed very detailed and remarkably frank about the subjects' abilities. While it must be borne in mind that the referees are unlikely to be familiar with the demands of

the Bath course, let alone the specific talents required of a professional linguist, they undoubtedly provide a reasonable assessment of applicants' linguistic capabilities in the light of their undergraduate studies. Where necessary, references are followed up for clarification. Certain referees obviously supply information frequently over the years and their comments may thus acquire particular significance in one sense or another.

The closing date for applications is in mid-January. In the light of the references received, a number of selection boards are organized for February and March. There would normally be two boards for candidates offering French and German

and one shared between French and Italian and French and Russian, plus a final, smaller board for candidates whose references were provided late or who were unable to attend at other times. The maximum number of candidates per board is 12, so that of the original 100 to 140 applicants between 55 and 60 are likely to be interviewed and tested, i.e. some 45% on average.

Each selection board lasts a whole day and consists of an introduction to the course, interviews and oral and written language tests. These tests have been evolved over the years by the various academic staff concerned and differ slightly between languages. However, the general format and marking structure are the same and the various elements are intended to run parallel to one another. By way of example, the French and German tests will be described here.

Both sets of tests include two passages for translation. Each text is about 200 words long and is usually taken from the press of the country concerned. The subject-matter often relates to the culture or politics of that country, thus implicitly testing the candidates' awareness of current events or trends. The passages are chosen with a view to assessing not only the candidates' knowledge of the French or German language but also their command of the appropriate English idiom, and it is here that the crucial distinctions are made in the awarding of marks. The passages could not be described as particularly difficult from the point of view of vocabulary or syntax, even without dictionaries or other aids: however, with only 40 minutes to complete both translations in each language, the candidates are under considerable pressure of time and are thus prevented from pausing at great length for reflection. While serious misunderstandings or gaps in vocabulary will obviously be marked down, the examiners are looking in particular at the candidates' ability to produce a fluent English rendering under difficult conditions. Each passage is marked out of 20.

Likewise, an extempore translation is common to both testing procedures. This involves the candidates writing down a translation of a passage read out, at dictation speed, by the examiner. While the level of difficulty is not particularly high, no time is allowed for revision or correction of the English text. The subject-matter is again frequently related to current affairs or topical events. This test of aural comprehension and rapid translation into English also carries a mark of 20.

Differences exist in the oral tests and conduct of interviews in the two languages. In French, the basis for oral testing is a passage of about 600 words of quite complex structure, but containing a complete argument, relating to some aspect of contemporary France and taken from the serious press. Each candidate is given five minutes to study this text, taking notes, and then required to give an oral summary of the passage in English. The exercise is intended to test ability to comprehend and summarize the contents of the passage and also public speaking skills, i.e. voice projection, clarity of diction and persuasiveness of delivery. In the preliminary instructions, it is stressed that time is limited, so that a line-by-line analysis or translation is impossible, and that the summary should be presented as if to an audience. To assist in creating this impression, the candidate is seated at the opposite end of a long table from the examiner and in front of a microphone, which can in fact be used to register vocal strength.

This summary leads into a conversation, beginning in English and then switching into French, which explores the text further and goes on to discuss the candidates' motivation, work expectations, personal background and so on. The total time for the whole exercise is about 20 minutes. Both the summary exercise and the subsequent oral/interview carry 20 marks, but the former is informally weighted over the latter in the overall assessment of candidates.

In German, there is no oral summary exercise. Instead, two texts are read aloud to candidates, who are required to summarize them in writing. Each text is read once only. The first is of about 150 words, and the second of between 50 and 80 words. Both texts deal with everyday matters and do not require any particular background knowledge. Candidates are allowed four minutes to summarize the longer text and three minutes for the second. The whole exercise carries 20 marks.

Quite separately, candidates offering German are interviewed by a member of staff, beginning with a conversation in English about their personal background and moving into a discussion in German on a topic arising from their studies or interests or simply chosen by the examiner beforehand. This conversation/interview also carries 20 marks.

There are thus five elements in the tests for each language, each carrying 20 marks. At the end of all the selection boards, the candidates are ranked for each of their languages by the tutor responsible on the basis of the marks awarded, and then graded A, B, C or D. In this grading, account is taken of unusually high or low scores on a particular exercise. For example, a candidate who was virtually bilingual would no doubt score very highly on the conversation/interview section, but perhaps do less well on the summarizing test. The significance of the letters is as follows: A indicates an excellent candidate who would be welcome on the course; B signifies a good candidate who would be expected to complete the course satisfactorily; C is an expression of doubt - the candidate

has weaknesses in the language which would have to be offset by strengths in the other, but is probably just good enough to pass the course; D (or worse) means automatic rejection, whatever the grading in the candidate's other language.

A group of candidates thus emerges, usually numbering between 10 and 16, who satisfy the requirements for entry to the course. At this stage, bearing in mind the *ad hoc* language quota arrangements for that particular year, seven candidates are selected to whom firm offers will be made (with bursaries attached). There is no rigid ranking of candidates by marks obtained, because of this need for flexibility in choosing between languages. The distinction is rather between acceptable and unacceptable candidates as such. Nevertheless, outstanding candidates, i.e. those with two As, would be offered places in any circumstances. There have never been more than four such candidates in any one year. A reserve list is also compiled of candidates who are acceptable but who cannot be nominated for bursaries unless one of the first-choice candidates withdraws. Such applicants might, however, be able to finance themselves from other sources.

In general terms, therefore, the number of suitable applicants actually wishing to attend the course more or less matches the number of places available, with the very best candidates being assured of firm offers and the allocation of the other places dependent on language combinations and the availability of funding.

5.1.3 Course content and methodology

5.1.3.1 Translation

There are two hours of translation classes incorporated in the course for each language offered, plus one extra 'floating' hour which is devoted to précis writing and other aspects of a linguist's work such as terminology, research and becoming acquainted with unfamiliar fields. In addition, two hours a week for each language are spent with a foreign language assistant on a variety of exercises, as described below. In the second term, however, these hours are devoted entirely to interpreting practice with the assistance of the native speakers.

The passages used for practising translation are drawn from material provided by international organizations and from the serious and technical press of the country concerned. One of the two contact hours is spent analysing and translating one or more such texts, with an emphasis on the technical side: a passage is set for translation in the students' own time which is handed in, marked and then discussed at a subsequent class. The other class is devoted partly to exercises in on-sight translation, where the students are required to deliver a translation, as to an audience, of a previously unseen text, and partly to the translation of less specialized texts on politics, economics and the like. A second weekly translation is performed in the students' own time. A wide range of specialist dictionaries and glossaries are available for students' use.

The purpose of the two hours per week per language spent with the foreign language assistants is to maintain and develop the students' familiarity with the source language. Although some general advice is given to the assistants at the beginning of the course as to what they should be seeking to achieve, they are largely free to devise their own activities. Thus some classes will take the form of debates or discussions in the foreign language, while others might involve the writing of summaries or descriptions, again in the language of the assistant. There may also be a certain amount of translation, orally or in writing, from English into the source language, although this exercise, like the others performed with the assistants, does not play any part in the students' assessment.

Over the year, the students attend four series of lectures given by staff from other faculties of the university on topics which they are likely to encounter in their future work. These topics are at present nuclear power, aerospace technology, data processing and medicine. The technical translations given to students as part of their coursework are duly linked to these topics throughout the course. Although the staff involved are not generally linguists and can therefore offer little advice on questions of translation or foreign terminology, they are naturally available to answer questions of scientific detail. A recent innovation has been the introduction of a short series of classes on machine translation.

During each course, a number of experts visit Bath and spend a day or more giving concentrated tuition to the students either in a particular field, such as legal translation, or on the professional approach in general. These experts are current or recently retired senior translators in government departments or international organizations.

There is no element of translation theory or stylistics in the course. This fact is partly due to staffing difficulties and partly to a feeling that these subjects, while an interesting field, are not directly relevant to the short-term aims of the course and the students. Moreover, it is felt that the activities in practical language classes raise the same type of questions of the students and the texts that might be dealt with in a theory class. The approach to the texts used implies a degree of reflection on the register concerned, the style of the original and the purpose of the translation, though oriented towards the practical rather than the theoretical viewpoint.

5.1.3.2 Interpreting

Interpreting also entails two contact hours per language per week, one for consecutive and one for simultaneous, plus a number of 'audio practice' hours where the conference interpreting facilities are reserved for the postgraduate students. As mentioned above, the two hours each week spent with the foreign language assistants are

used for interpreting practice with a native speaker from the second term onwards. Interpreting is only ever practised into English.

It should be made clear at the outset that there is no coordinated overall approach to the teaching of interpreting at Bath. Each member of staff responsible for a particular aspect of the subject proceeds as he sees fit, on the basis of previous experience and in the light of visits and comments by practising professionals and external examiners. None of the staff involved has any experience of working as a professional interpreter.

Students begin their work on consecutive interpreting by practising note-taking from English, moving on to short utterances in the source language and then gradually to longer speeches of up to five minutes. The method used is the same for all languages: the teacher reads a passage with all the students taking notes; one student is then asked to give an interpretation; the teacher then comments on this performance, if necessary asking the other students to correct mistakes or fill in gaps. Apart from receiving a few general guidelines, students are left free to devise their own systems of note-taking.

Work on simultaneous interpreting begins with a series of preparatory exercises designed to introduce students gently to the mental processes involved, for example 'shadowing', where the student simply repeats a speech delivered in English. Students are not expected to be capable of interpreting speeches of any substantial length until the end of the first term. Initial

sessions are therefore held in a language laboratory rather than the conference interpreting facility. Given that the teaching staff are not in a position to offer very much advice on the practical techniques of interpreting, they perhaps tend to concentrate on those aspects of the interpreter's performance which are most obvious to the listener, namely misunderstandings, diction and style of delivery. Students are encouraged to listen to and analyse their own performance, correcting errors and improving delivery on one piece before moving on to the next. The material used is carefully graded so as to allow the students to progress steadily, and is generally derived from the proceedings of international bodies.

As will be seen later, the absence of experienced interpreters among the staff at Bath is frequently seen by the students as a shortcoming of the course. However, they do have two other opportunities to acquire interpreting skills, namely private practice and visits from professionals.

The audio practice and conference interpreting facilities are available for use by postgraduate students whenever they are not required for other classes. This effectively means that interpreting can be practised as much as the students wish. However, this practice depends entirely on the students themselves; there is no official organization or control of the use made of the facilities. The same applies to the arrangement of mock conferences with the collaboration of the foreign language assistants, this being done solely by the students and without any input from members of staff, or indeed their presence. At best, it is possible for

two or three of these conferences to be organized in each of the last two terms of the course, but while the course authorities approve of such ventures they do little or nothing to further them.

The course authorities do, however, arrange for a number of visits by professional interpreters from the beginning of the second term onwards. The aim is to have six such visits over the two terms, each lasting a day, with a further visit lasting a full week early in the second term. In recent years this intensive period of tuition has been provided by a senior interpreter from the European Parliament. It has also proved possible for occasional practice sessions to be held with an experienced interpreter based in Bath. These visiting interpreters generally bring their own material with them and have different approaches to the task of training, for a brief period, a group of would-be professional colleagues. Despite the lack of a structured framework, however, it is recognised that the input from visiting professionals is considerably greater than that provided by the in-house teaching staff.

5.1.4 Staff and resources

As indicated above, there are no teaching staff at Bath with professional experience of interpreting. Apart from occasional freelance work, there is a corresponding absence of experience in translation. Given that the course has been running for 20 years, however, a certain amount of expertise has been acquired in specific areas of training students for entry into the professions.

The teaching load is spread thinly, with no individual member of staff contributing more than one hour to the course. For the purposes of continuity, individuals are encouraged to develop their own techniques in particular areas, so that the same person will teach consecutive interpreting from French, for example, over an extended period. This approach means that in the larger language sections some members of staff have no involvement with the course.

The facilities available at Bath consist of a small conference room with six interpreting booths, three conventional language laboratories and an audio practice room converted from a language laboratory in which students can listen to tapes but not record their own speech. The level of funds available for equipment is determined by the overall number of students in the School of Modern Languages; the postgraduate course carries no specific funding of its own.

5.1.5 Practical experience

All the students at Bath are given the opportunity to spend a period of time, usually four weeks, as a trainee with an international organization. Some students may be able to visit two such organizations. These arrangements were first made on the basis of personal contacts between the course organizers and the language services concerned and have been consolidated over the years, not least through the subsequent recruitment of former Bath students as full-time staff. Most of the traineeships are offered in

translation services, if only because the students will be able to make some practical contribution. However, the European Parliament in Luxembourg has in the past provided a place for a trainee interpreter, who is able to observe professionals at work and gain experience by practising in spare booths at meetings. Other current host organizations are the IAEA in Vienna, the European Patent Office in Munich, CERN in Geneva, the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, the Customs Cooperation Council and the EC Commission in Brussels and the OECD and the International Union of Railways in Paris.

Not all these traineeships provide remuneration, and the students therefore have to consider whether the financial outlay is justified. The majority do take up the opportunities provided, recognizing that this sort of practical experience would be very difficult to acquire by other means. In some years, payments to trainees are pooled and shared out equally, but such arrangements obviously depend on the agreement of all concerned and are not always feasible.

The traineeships begin in January, so that some are bound to overlap wholly or in part with the teaching provided at Bath. It is nevertheless felt that the advantages far outweigh the drawback of missing up to four weeks of the course. Students are not given any coursework to do while they are away, since this might be seen as inappropriate by the host organization.

5.1.6 Assessment

The only elements of the course which are subject to continuous assessment are translation and précis writing. All assignments in these two areas are included in this assessment, which amounts to 40% of the total marks awarded for the course. Interpreting is regarded as something which is learnt *ab initio* and tested only at the end of the course, whereas all the students will have had some experience of translation at undergraduate level and are required to adapt their skills rather than begin an entirely new discipline.

The examinations at the end of the course consist of tests in translation and both consecutive and simultaneous interpreting. For each language, the translation tests involve a three-hour paper with three compulsory passages to be translated into English, totalling some 1,000 words. No dictionaries or reference books are allowed. The first text is of a general nature, perhaps dealing with a political or philosophical question, and the second relates to some aspect of law or economics. The third is a technical text, often concerning the nuclear power sector in at least one of the languages. The reason for this lies in the arrangements for traineeships away from Bath: since these only begin in January, it can be guaranteed that all the students will be able to attend the series of background lectures on nuclear energy, which are always given in the autumn term. All assessment of translation work is performed by the teaching staff.

The course originally included an extended translation, performed over several weeks, which formed part of the continuous assessment element. This was dropped in the late 1970s, however, and replaced by a long legal translation performed by all the students as a team in conjunction with visits by a specialist legal translator. Each student prepares a section of the chosen text and a coordinator is responsible for the consistency of terminology and presentation.

The interpreting tests take place over two or three days, the first part covering consecutive interpreting and on-sight translation, the second simultaneous interpreting. All assessment of interpreting work is performed by two external examiners from international organizations, typically one from the United Nations and one from a European Community institution. Other representatives of similar organizations may attend as observers at their request.

In the on-sight translation test, the candidate is given a text of about 300 words and required to deliver a translation, as to an audience, after studying the passage for one minute. This test is immediately followed by the consecutive interpreting exercise, in which a single passage lasting about five minutes is read out by a native speaker at the pace at which it might normally be delivered. The student then gives back his interpretation with the aid of his notes. Separate sessions are held for each language.

The simultaneous interpreting tests are held in the conference room. One student at a time sits in a booth and is briefly told the subject-matter of the speeches he is about to hear. Any unusual references or proper names are clarified at the same time. Two texts of approximately five minutes each are then read out by a native speaker, again at normal speed. The texts used for both interpreting tests are generally taken from the proceedings of international bodies, for example the verbatim report of proceedings of the European Parliament. However, they are always delivered 'live' to the student and not simply played back on tape. Once again, separate sessions are held for each language.

The overall total of marks available for the course is 1,000. Of this total, 400 are for coursework, 300 for the translation tests and 300 for the interpreting tests. The further breakdown is as follows:

- coursework: 300 for translation and 100 for précis writing;
- translation tests: 50 per passage;
- interpreting tests: 140 for simultaneous, 120 for consecutive and 40 for on-sight.

The pass-mark for the course is 400, which may be obtained by any means. It is not necessary to pass all elements of the course in order to be awarded the final diploma. No student has ever failed the course, although one initially did so, but then passed on resit; two students have left the course without completing their studies.

5.1.7 Links with employers

The course at Bath is a vocational one whose purpose is to enable its students to obtain posts in international organizations. Since its inception, therefore, those responsible for running the course have fostered contacts with potential employers and sought to convince them of their students' abilities. The system of traineeships is an obvious way of enabling employers to assess the standards applied at the training institution as well as a means of giving the student practical experience. As students have succeeded in obtaining posts in a range of organizations, so the reputation of the course has grown. As will be discussed subsequently, acceptance for the course carries with it a stamp of approval which suggests that the student is at least worthy of serious consideration for employment. The problem for courses operating in this particular sector, however, is that large international organizations are frequently obliged to recruit by open competition and are thus unable to fill posts directly from training institutions, regardless of the candidates' abilities. The most that can be done officially is for organizations to give notice of forthcoming competitions and to ensure that these are not held on the same days as the course examinations. Nevertheless, it is often possible for interpreters, in particular, to be employed as freelances or for temporary contracts to be arranged.

Occasional approaches are made by firms in the private sector and freelance agencies, and these are passed on to those students still seeking employment. Whether or not they are pursued depends

very much on the students' determination to work in the international sector and their perception of the employment situation at the time. Hence it has proved difficult for Bath to develop any permanent contacts on the basis of this kind of approach: such links can only be maintained if students are regularly available and supplied.

5.1.8 Statistics and student feedback

Former Bath students are employed in a wide range of international organizations. The most recent survey, carried out on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the course in 1986, showed a total of 105 employed by 40 different bodies, in addition to those working as freelances or in other sectors involving languages, such as higher education. The course authorities claim that around 90% of Bath diplomates have found professional linguist posts in industry, commerce, public service and the international organizations.

As regards the intake for 1986-87, the information supplied by the DES shows that six of the eight DES-funded finishers found employment in their subject area, with the destinations of the two remaining students listed as unknown.

Questionnaires were completed by all eight students who took the course in 1986-87. Seven had heard of the course through university careers services, the eighth through an advertisement in

a national newspaper. Half the students had applied to other courses in translation and/or interpreting, one each to Bradford, Kent and PCL, and one to both PCL and Bradford. The remainder had only applied to Bath.

Expectations of being able to earn a living as a professional linguist were somewhat mixed: four students thought they would do so, two did not and the other two were unsure. These views correlated to a large extent with the replies given to Question 7, which asked whether the students had been interviewed or tested for employment since the beginning of the course. Four students were able to answer in the affirmative, and two had received firm offers of employment. There was unanimous agreement, however, that the course had enhanced the students' employment prospects in general.

The students' views on helpful or unsatisfactory aspects of the course tended towards the critical. There were three main areas that attracted adverse comment: the quality and attitude of the teaching staff, the lack of individual attention and the arrangements for teaching interpreting. The staff were accused of not being fully familiar with the subjects to be taught and of adopting a generally offhand attitude to the course. Several students felt that their work was not discussed in sufficient detail and that they could have received more individual counselling on their progress, particularly as regards interpreting. The technical facilities available for the latter were criticized, and there was a general demand for more time to be spent on interpreting tuition.

On the positive side, there was approval for the lectures on specialized topics and for the quality and quantity of the material available on the European Community and its institutions. The best aspects of the course were seen as the visits from professional interpreters and the contacts provided with international organizations, particularly as regards traineeships and possible openings for subsequent employment. The course was summed up by one student in the following terms: 'The course has much potential, but needs individual effort on the part of the student as pressure is nil. Contacts are still rated highly (the reason I came on the course!).'

5.2 University of Bradford

5.2.1 Course aims and background

The Postgraduate Diploma and MA in Interpreting and Translating, introduced in 1975, is a one-year course designed to prepare modern languages graduates for careers as professional linguists. Such careers are defined as those of general, industrial and conference interpreters and technical and commercial translators.

Students must offer two of French, German and Russian. The absence of other languages taught in the department, notably Spanish, is not due to any particular philosophy of the employment market but purely to considerations of staffing and logistics. There are no rigid quotas for the number of students taking a given language, although for practical reasons connected with the layout of booths in the conference interpreting facility, it is felt that the number taking any one language should not normally exceed 12. Throughout the selection procedure and each individual course, the department is at pains to monitor the situation on the employment market to the best of its ability, taking account not just of the demand from international organizations or other bodies offering full-time employment, but also of the freelance sector at home and abroad. However, while market conditions necessarily affect the department's approach in specific areas - such as encouraging students to begin other languages - the overriding factor in the distribution of places on the course between the three basic

languages remains the quality of the applicants. No potentially outstanding candidate would be denied admission to the course on the grounds of an undesirable combination of languages.

It would be wrong to assume that Russian, being the least frequently taught of the three languages, is permanently the minority option. There have in fact been years in which more than half the students on the course have offered Russian.

The allocation of DES bursaries to the course has alternated between 10 and 11 in recent years, and these figures can thus be regarded as the norm for the number of students on the course, though individual circumstances have occasionally resulted in fewer places being taken up; on the other hand, if further candidates of sufficiently high quality are able to obtain the necessary finance, they would normally be admitted to the course, so that as many as 15 students have been in attendance in certain years.

5.2.2 Selection procedures

The course is advertised at regular intervals in the national press and details are circulated to university and polytechnic careers services. The trend in applications has been steadily upwards; at present a total of between 120 and 150 applications would be expected each year, representing a ratio of 11 or 12 per place on the course. The majority of applicants offer French and

German, but as indicated in the previous section, this preponderance is not necessarily reflected in the allocation of places.

Since the closing date for applications is as late as 1 March, the process of screening, testing and interviewing candidates is spread over several months. As the number of applications has increased, the course authorities have felt it necessary to be more and more selective in calling applicants for tests and interview. This screening, as well as subsequent decisions on applications, is carried out by an admissions panel consisting of one representative per language and headed by the course tutor.

References are taken up on all applicants except those who clearly do not meet the basic criteria for admission to the course. A special form has been devised for this purpose, which is accompanied by a covering letter. In the letter, it is explained that the questionnaire is designed both to ease the burden of the referee in compiling a conventional reference and to elicit frank information on specific aspects of the candidate's linguistic potential. Referees are not of course obliged to make use of the questionnaire, but are requested at least to base their replies as far as possible on the questions it contains.

There are three key sections of the questionnaire (see Appendix VIII): the first asks the referee to rate the applicant in relation to other students of his year in terms of (a) general intellectual capacity, (b) translation, including English style and appreciation of semantic nuance and (c) oral expression, in English

and the foreign language; the second asks for an assessment of the applicant's ability to carry out an important and difficult translation; the third requests a similar assessment of the applicant's likely performance as a guide and *ad hoc* interpreter for an important foreign visitor. While the format of these questions may restrict the amount of detailed information that can be given on an individual's potential, it does have the virtue of obviating the likely difficulty that referees may be unfamiliar both with the requirements of the course and the specific demands made on a professional linguist. Moreover, the questionnaire attempts to lead the referee away from simply passing judgment on the applicant's performance as an undergraduate and towards an assessment of his suitability for a particular form of vocational training. It also has the obvious merit, from the point of view of comparing candidates, of standardizing the replies to some extent.

On the basis of the references received, the admissions panel determines which applicants should be invited to attend for tests and interview. Selection boards are held at fortnightly intervals throughout the spring term and are generally scheduled to coincide with simulated conferences in which the current postgraduate students are involved. This gives candidates some idea of that aspect of the course with which they are likely to be least familiar, namely interpreting, prior to undergoing the aptitude tests. The number of applicants tested at each selection board varies between six and twelve, depending on the influx of applications and references. Since an average of 65 to 70% of candidates are called for testing, between 85 and 105 of the

original 120 to 150 applicants are thus likely to go through the process.

Before attending for the tests, candidates are sent a passage in each of their languages to translate at home and return to Bradford. Each is about 300 words in length and might deal, for example, with some aspect of technology that requires a certain amount of research on the part of the applicant, without going into excessive technical detail. The level of linguistic difficulty is lower than that of the test passages translated without reference books at the selection board. The object of this exercise is to test the applicant's ability to use dictionaries and other aids intelligently and to investigate a field with which he is unfamiliar. Marks for these translations (A, B or C for each language) are incorporated into the final grading, as described below.

The selection board procedures take place in a single afternoon and consist of written translation and editing tests, interviews and language laboratory tests. The design and format of the tests are the same for all languages.

Candidates are required to translate two passages, one from each language offered, in 40 minutes. Each text is between 150 and 200 words long, and dictionaries are not allowed. The subject-matter is generally abstract and the level of difficulty pitched deliberately high, the aim being to see how candidates cope with a

complex passage under severe pressure of time. As with the home translations, two marks on an A-B-C scale are given.

An innovation for 1987 was the editing test, in which candidates are given a journalistic text of some 250 words in English containing deliberate grammatical mistakes and instructed to correct any errors of English, punctuation or layout. They are also required to re-write the concluding sentence in a way which improves the English without altering the effect or sense of that section of the text. Twenty minutes are allowed for this exercise, which was introduced as a means of testing not only the candidates' command of spelling and punctuation, but also their ability to manipulate the surface structures of a text so as to achieve the most satisfactory result, while leaving the underlying ideas intact. The test is scored out of 40, with 25 marks being set aside for the correction of mistakes and the remainder for the re-writing exercise.

The interviews last around 20 minutes and consist of two conversations with each candidate in the foreign languages offered, plus a third exchange in English. The first two discussions are intended to reveal the candidates' general competence and fluency in the foreign languages, their reading habits and their knowledge of the cultural background or society of the countries concerned. The purpose of the conversation in English is to enable an assessment to be made of the candidates' command of their mother tongue and to show whether they have a realistic idea of the qualities of the interpreter and translator. An overall A-B-C rating is given for

each language to indicate a candidate's general suitability for the course.

There are four language laboratory tests in each language. These are conducted in the spacious conference interpreting facility, with the candidates sitting in booths. The procedure is completely automated, with the candidates working through the pre-recorded exercises and their responses being recorded on cassette for subsequent analysis by the admissions panel. Apart from the person administering the tests, there is normally no audience, so candidates are not subjected to the pressure of immediate judgment.

In the first test, a series of 20 short sentences involving idiomatic expressions in the foreign language is played to the candidates, each followed by a pause of about five seconds for an interpretation to be given. The same pattern is followed in the second test, but with the original in English and an interpretation into the foreign language. The sentences, which are delivered very much as realistic utterances by native speakers, would present the candidates with little difficulty on paper, but the pressure to produce an instant response inevitably gives rise to mistakes. So as not to make the exercise too daunting, and to prevent a candidate who misses two or three consecutive phrases from giving up completely, some very easy sentences are incorporated at intervals. These are clearly not memory tests, but nor are they simply designed to assess the candidates' linguistic versatility and performance under pressure: much importance is attached to the precision of the responses given, for example whether the tense used in the original

utterance has been preserved and whether every essential point has been covered by the interpretation. This attention to detail is illustrated by the fact that five marks are allocated to each of these short sentences, the two tests thus both being marked out of one hundred.

The third test consists of a short interpreting scenario, for example a speech of welcome at an airport, broken down into five separate foreign-language utterances of increasing difficulty and length. Without taking notes, the candidates deliver their interpretations in the pauses; the time allowed is ample, perhaps twice the length of the utterances themselves. This is principally a test of short-term memory, since the candidates are not expected to have any linguistic difficulty with the contents of the speech. Nevertheless, in an exercise which is something of a cross between consecutive and simultaneous interpreting, elements such as diction, delivery, and the ability to cope with unexpected problems of vocabulary are all taken into account. Twenty marks are allocated for each utterance.

Finally, candidates are required to produce an on-sight translation into English of a text of 200 to 250 words, still in the interpreting booth with their performances being recorded on tape. While all the texts used are general in nature, the French passages consist of relatively short and simple sentences, but with linguistic traps deliberately set for the unwary translator, whereas the German and Russian texts are shorter but more syntactically complex. No time is allowed for the candidates to read through the

texts, apart from a few seconds in which to study the opening sentence, nor are they offered any advice at all on such questions of technique as leaving gaps or pausing between sentences to read ahead. A single percentage mark is awarded for this exercise.

The on-sight translation is seen by the staff at Bradford as a particularly good predictor of candidates' potential, largely because, in the absence of any instructions on how to deal with the text, it is up to each candidate to devise a strategy for coping with the difficulties involved. The physical situation - delivering an oral translation in an enclosed booth without an audience - is calculated to test a candidate's nerves and adaptability, without subjecting him to undue mental pressure. The staff concerned are at pains to point out that their intention is not to set impossible obstacles for the candidates, but rather to study how they approach the task in hand, assuming that they have a basic level of linguistic competence.

At the end of a selection board, each candidate will have been awarded a series of A-B-C grades and other marks for each language offered. The assessor for each language then makes an overall A-B-C rating of the candidate's suitability for the course and the admissions panel meets to merge these two ratings into a single grade, representing a final decision on the candidate's application. Candidates graded A are offered places on the course immediately; those graded B are placed on a waiting list and further categorized as B1, B2 or B3 in order of merit; the remainder, ranked C or below, are rejected.

In making these final decisions, the admissions panel bears in mind in particular the fact that all students admitted to the course will eventually be required to pass an interpreting examination, whether or not they are specializing in that discipline. Candidates' performance in the language laboratory tests is therefore closely scrutinized. As regards translation, it is felt that candidates who are able to cope with the difficult texts set, under pressure of time and without dictionaries, are likely to meet the future requirements of the course.

The number of candidates graded A has proved to be self-limiting, so that no such candidate has ever been denied the offer of a place on the course. Each year a number of candidates from the waiting-list are offered and take up places which carry DES bursaries, while the occasional B-ranked student is able to find alternative funding.

5.2.3 Course content and methodology

5.2.3.1 General structure

The course comprises the following four activities: conference interpreting, translation, translation theory and summarizing techniques. In the first term, all students follow an introductory basic course in these subjects, the components of which are described in detail below. In the light of their performance, it is decided which advanced courses in interpreting and/or translation

will be followed by individual students in the second and third terms in addition to the basic course, with a minimum of two such options having to be taken. Hence a student wishing to specialize in interpreting may opt to follow the advanced interpreting course in both languages, and likewise with translation. Alternatively, advanced interpreting can be taken in one language and advanced translation in the other. In exceptional circumstances, and with the approval of the course tutor, it is possible to follow both advanced courses in both languages, a syllabus which obviously places considerable demands on the student.

It must be emphasized that while specialization in one discipline or the other is an essential feature of the course, all students continue to study both interpreting and translation at some level throughout and are required to pass examinations in all elements of the course.

Students who succeed in obtaining the postgraduate diploma may be permitted to transfer to a supplementary course leading to the degree of Master by advanced study in Interpreting and Translating, which extends over a further period of three months' full-time study devoted to work on a project and preparation of a dissertation.

5.2.3.2 Translation

Throughout the course, two hours a week of translation classes are provided for each language offered as the basic level of

tuition. Students who opt for an advanced translation course in the second and third terms receive an additional hour a week of tuition for each language in which they follow such a course. While some of the time spent with foreign language assistants (see section 5.2.3.4) may be used for translation activities, this is not the prime purpose of such classes.

The aim of the basic course is to enable students to master the techniques of translation rather than to seek to familiarize them with texts of a particular nature or with a specific subject area. The passages used in classes are therefore drawn from a wide range of sources, including documents from international organizations, public sector administrations and private industry, as well as articles from the foreign press. While the intention is to expose students to a broad range of material, the texts used will naturally tend to reflect the interests of the person teaching the course. On occasion, a member of the university staff from another department may approach the course tutor with a text requiring translation, in which case the opportunity is taken to give students an introduction to a new subject area, with appropriate input from the client department.

The format of the classes follows a conventional pattern, with texts being discussed and translated by the student group under the guidance of the tutor. Students are required to translate other passages in their own time which are marked and later reviewed in class.

Apart from the classes in the four activities which make up the course and their work with the foreign language assistants, students spend one hour a week throughout the year studying various practical aspects of translation work, such as obtaining documentation and researching unfamiliar areas of terminology, as well as being trained in the use of word-processing equipment.

Some tutors incorporate an on-sight translation exercise into their classes, where students are required to give an oral translation of an unfamiliar text. The aim here is to develop the mental processes involved, rather than to use this activity as a means of improving the quality of delivery as an aspect of interpreting performance. Students are not normally required to perform translations, written or oral, into a foreign language.

In the advanced translation options, which are not necessarily taught by the same members of staff as the basic courses, students are confronted with more difficult and more specialized material which will require a greater degree of preparation and background research on the part of the translator. As an element of the final examinations, students undertake a translation project in which they are given a text of around 5,000 words to translate within two and a half days, an exercise designed to parallel the work of a professional linguist. The subject-matter is generally such as might be found in a popular scientific or technical magazine (for an example, see Appendix IX).

5.2.3.3 Interpreting

During the first term, all students receive four hours of tuition a week in interpreting for each language offered. This reduces to a common basic course of three hours a week in the second and third terms, with those students taking an advanced interpreting option attending two further hours of classes a week per language.

The teaching of interpreting is shared between two or three members of staff for each basic course, with another colleague taking responsibility for the advanced option. While the course at Bradford is carefully structured to provide the students with a series of achievable goals, gradually raising their individual levels of competence, no single methodology is imposed on teaching staff, who recognise similar priorities in their work but are free to adopt a variety of practical approaches. Indeed, one common principle is a concentration on the practical, on being able to respond flexibly to different styles and contexts, to the exclusion of purely theoretical considerations. This is perhaps a reflection of the fact that all the staff engaged in teaching interpreting have professional experience as interpreters and continue to work occasionally as freelances.

The initial basic course begins with an introduction to note-taking for consecutive interpreting, accompanied by exercises to develop short-term memory. Students are left free to evolve their own systems of keywords, abbreviations, symbols and layout, though it is pointed out that there is a certain amount of common ground

amongst interpreters which it would be wise not to ignore, given the occasional necessity for teamwork. This introductory phase, lasting between 16 and 20 hours, cuts across the different language timetables and is taught by a single member of staff, who is then joined or replaced by his colleagues. Simultaneous interpreting is introduced towards the end of November, shortly before the point when the decision is taken on which advanced options students are to pursue. This decision is reached by the students and their teachers both communicating their preferences to the course tutor, who then seeks, if necessary, to reconcile any differences of view.

Students who continue to follow only the basic course in the second and third terms are not examined in simultaneous interpreting; however, they do have the opportunity to practise this activity in conferences and during private training, and are indeed encouraged to do so, given that they may well be required to interpret simultaneously at some stage in their careers. Broadly speaking, therefore, the basic course in interpreting covers consecutive while the advanced option focuses on simultaneous. It should be emphasized that in consecutive interpreting, students are required to work both into English and the foreign language, so as to be able to cover a dialogue completely, whereas in simultaneous all work is into English.

As indicated above, the methods used to teach interpreting vary between members of staff, with emphasis being placed on different aspects of performance. Some teachers concentrate on delivery, encouraging students to put themselves in the position of

the delegate relying on interpreters. In pursuit of this consumer-oriented approach, the university's fellow in theatre has on occasion been brought in to analyse the students' presentation. Others prefer to use tapes of professional interpreters at work to provide students with examples of technique, and reinforce such models during the visits by professionals which take place at intervals throughout the second and third terms.

Other areas of difference are the ways in which texts for interpreting are prepared and the students' performance subsequently discussed. One school of thought holds that the subject of a text should be prepared in a general way, rather as an interpreter might find out in advance the topic to be discussed at a particular meeting, but without dealing with specific items of vocabulary. While not seeking to confront students with texts which are simply too difficult, the aim is to train them to cope with gaps in lexical knowledge. A different approach is to prepare the source text in great detail, to the extent of reading it out prior to the interpreting exercise, so that all difficulties of vocabulary are eliminated beforehand and the students are able to concentrate exclusively on their performance in the target language. The difference here lies perhaps in the approach to building up the students' confidence in their own abilities, since there would presumably be agreement on the final standard to be achieved.

Similarly, some teachers prefer to keep critiques of students' performance during classes to a minimum, moving on quickly to a fresh topic. Brief comments might be made on each individual at the

end of an exercise, or a group critique could be developed, but without conducting a detailed post mortem on a text. Others take the view that individual performances should be subjected to the closest scrutiny in and by the group, seeing this as a productive means of exposing weaknesses and ensuring that mistakes are identified and not repeated. While individual students will respond differently to these various methods, it must be assumed that the net result, in terms of examination performance, is felt to be satisfactory, since otherwise a more consistent methodology would by now have been imposed.

An important feature of the interpreting courses at Bradford are the simulated conferences organized at regular intervals during the second and third terms. These conferences, which are simulated only in the sense that the participants pretend to be the representatives of an organization or department from their countries of origin, take place in one of the interpreting suites in the Modern Languages Centre. The usual format is that an English speaker from outside the department - not necessarily an academic - is invited to chair a discussion on a subject related to his or her area of expertise. For example, a conference on 'The Rise and Fall of Film Culture' was chaired by the Director of the Bradford Playhouse and Film Theatre. Other chairmen have included the head of a major textile exporting company, the Assistant Chief Constable of West Yorkshire, the Lord Mayor of Bradford, the local Director of Education and the headmaster of a school for handicapped children. There is a minimum of three other participants, native speakers of French, German and Russian, occasionally drawn from external

backgrounds but more frequently from among the department's foreign language assistants, especially in the case of the Russian delegate. An agenda is drawn up by the chairman and the member of staff responsible for organizing the conference, and delegates may be able to meet the chairman in advance to consider ways of approaching the discussion.

The conferences take the form of four sessions, each lasting around 40 minutes. As previously mentioned, they are scheduled to coincide with visits by applicants for the following year's course for interviews and tests. It is accepted that the delegates' knowledge of English is adequate for comprehension purposes, so that interpretation into French, German or Russian is not supplied unless specifically requested by the chairman or a delegate. Simultaneous interpretation is provided by two teams of three students, a duplicate arrangement intended to give each student the maximum amount of authentic practice. The teams are changed for each session according to a predetermined schedule, though this may be modified as the conference proceeds. While not working in a team, students are free to observe or practise note-taking in an adjacent room with a window on the interpreting suite, or to practise simultaneous or consecutive interpreting in an unoccupied booth. All performances in booths, whether 'on air' or practice, are recorded on personal tapes which students carry with them. These, together with a video recording of the entire conference with an original-language soundtrack, are subsequently used to discuss and analyse students' performance.

Apart from the formal classes in interpreting and the simulated conferences, students are encouraged, indeed required, to undertake further practice exercises in their own time. For this purpose they are issued with practice tapes which can be used in an interpreting suite or language laboratory between classes, sometimes being told, for example, to work through a tape in preparation for the next class, at which another section of the same meeting or similar subject-matter will be used.

5.2.3.4 Other activities

The other components of the core curriculum followed by all students throughout the course are translation theory, summarizing techniques and practical oral exercises. One hour a week is spent on each of the first two activities and on the oral exercises in each language offered.

The classes in translation theory, the only activity other than translating and interpreting which is examined at the end of the course, normally consist of the analysis of a passage of translation in relation to the original. In fact, though the discussion may touch on some aspects of linguistics, 'translation theory' is something of a misnomer, since the emphasis is rather on practice and on the different approaches and techniques available to the translator.

Students are given instruction in précis writing during the classes in summarizing techniques and benefit from contact with native speakers through the oral exercises conducted by the foreign language assistants.

5.2.4 Staff and resources

While there is a core of staff who teach on the postgraduate course every year, for the most part those with expertise in interpreting, the contribution from other members of the department varies from year to year and some staff may never be deployed on the course at all. The input in terms of teaching time ranges between one and three hours per person per week, out of an overall individual load of ten or eleven hours.

As already mentioned, those members of staff who regularly teach interpreting all have substantial professional experience, three having worked as full-time interpreters and all their colleagues as freelancers. All continue to perform occasional freelance work, not least so as to keep in touch with developments in the employment market. On the translation side, while only one member of staff has worked as a full-time translator, several others have gained experience from short-term contracts or freelancing.

The Modern Languages Centre at Bradford is extensively equipped with practice facilities and teaching resources. The centrepieces are the two nine-booth interpreting suites, one of

which connects with an observation room containing video cameras and playback equipment. There are also conventional language laboratories, though these are used principally for undergraduate work. A wide range of audio and video tapes, reference works and publications is housed in a separate open-plan area which also provides audio work-stations at which students can listen to tapes. Adjoining this area are television booths in which foreign broadcasts received by satellite can be viewed. Lastly, postgraduate students are provided with a workroom containing word-processing equipment to which they have round-the-clock access and are encouraged to use this to prepare their translation assignments.

5.2.5 Practical experience

A period spent with an employer of professional linguists forms an integral part of the Bradford course and nearly always consists of a four-week placement as a trainee in a firm or organization over the Easter holiday. While this somewhat restrictive attitude to the timing of the visit may well limit the possibilities available to students, it is felt that the teaching and practice available at Bradford are too important for any substantial overlapping of course and placement to be envisaged.

The aim at Bradford is to maintain an extremely wide range of contacts and areas of interest both in terms of traineeships and potential subsequent employment. Care is taken to ensure that students are properly supervised during their stays and receive

guidance that will enable them to benefit fully from this brief exposure to the professional environment.

Nearly all the host organizations are based abroad and generally offer traineeships in their translation services; only major institutions such as the EC Commission and the European Parliament which have their own interpreting departments are in a position to offer facilities for trainee interpreters. Other current hosts include CERN, the WHO and the UN in Geneva, the European Patent Office in Munich, UNESCO in Paris and Shell in London.

Traineeships are frequently unremunerated, but it would appear that the advantages in terms of experience and personal contacts are seen by all concerned as far outweighing any short-term financial difficulties. In some years, students pool any income they receive. While it may be something of an exaggeration to describe traineeships as stepping-stones to permanent employment, they certainly represent a means of fostering the links between the course and potential employers which are discussed at greater length in the appropriate section.

5.2.6 Assessment

Although the written assignments given to students during the course are marked and commented upon by staff, these marks do not count at all in the process of assessing students for the award of

their diploma. The interim assessment carried out at the end of the first term is simply designed to ensure that students are guided towards the combination of advanced options to which they are best suited.

Formal assessment is therefore entirely based on the examinations held at the end of the course. These are made up of a minimum of seven elements, in each of which candidates must obtain a pass. The elements are basic translation in each language, basic interpreting in each language, translation theory and two advanced elements, according to the options followed by the student. Any additional advanced elements taken contribute to enhancing a student's career profile rather than to obtaining the diploma - for all candidates, it is sufficient to pass in two advanced elements.

Where an element consists of more than one test, failure in one such test is condoned as long as the average mark for that element is a pass. A candidate who fails not more than one element may resit that element in the following September; in the history of the course, two students have obtained the diploma by this means. Only one student has ever failed the final examination completely, and no student has left before the end of the course.

Percentage marks are awarded for each element and then reduced to an overall percentage mark. The pass-mark for the individual elements and for the diploma as a whole is 40%. The Board of Examiners may award a distinction to a candidate whose examination performance is deemed outstanding. Students who obtain a sound

overall mark and have no obvious areas of weakness are permitted to register for an MA degree, entailing the preparation over the next three months of a dissertation on an approved subject. This opportunity has been offered to between 50 and 60% of those students who have passed the diploma examinations.

In each basic translation element, students have three hours in which to translate two passages totalling around 700 words from the foreign language into English. The first text is compulsory for all candidates, but for the second there is a choice of three. The subject-matter in all languages is general and non-technical, with some texts being taken from such newspapers as 'Le Monde' or 'Die Zeit'.

An advanced translation element consists of two parts, the extended technical translation described in section 5.2.3.2 above and a three-hour examination paper in which students are required to translate into English two compulsory passages totalling some 800 words. The level of difficulty is naturally higher than in the basic element, with complex literary and philosophical texts, particularly in French, while the German and Russian passages often also cover political and industrial topics, the coal and steel sector being a favourite subject area.

In all the translation examinations, candidates are allowed to take one dictionary into the examination room.

In the translation theory element, students are required to translate a single passage from one of their foreign languages into English and then write a critique of this translation, commenting on their approach to the exercise and on the ways in which they have sought to solve the problems presented by the original text.

For the basic interpreting element, simulated meetings are organized in each language on the lines of the conferences used for simultaneous interpreting practice. The participants in these round-table discussions are a mixture of English and foreign language native speakers, and candidates are required to provide consecutive interpretation as if none of those taking part understood the other language being used, i.e. both from and into the foreign language. A topic is chosen for the meetings and an agenda circulated in advance, so that students have some opportunity to prepare the necessary vocabulary. While some suggestions are given to the participants as to how a dialogue might be developed, the exchanges are for the most part unscripted. Each meeting lasts for about 25 minutes.

The source material used in both parts of the advanced interpreting element consists of talks, commentaries or discussions recorded on videotape from foreign television stations and played back to the students on monitors. The consecutive test is normally a single extended passage lasting between eight and ten minutes. The simultaneous test lasts about the same time but is likely to involve more than one speaker. The subjects covered are of topical interest and require no special knowledge or preparation.

One external examiner contributes to the assessment of interpreting performance, a former academic who is now a practising interpreter. While representatives of international organizations are welcomed as observers at the tests, there is a feeling that established interpreters - especially senior staff who may be responsible for recruitment - tend to assess students' performance in rather black and white terms, without making the kind of distinctions which are helpful in determining the exact percentages to be awarded to each candidate.

5.2.7 Links with employers

The aim of the Bradford course is to prepare its students for employment as professional linguists without excluding any categories of potential employers. The course authorities consider that however carefully the selection procedures are applied, the group of students completing each course is bound to contain a certain range of interests and abilities. They consequently seek to maintain a broad network of contacts with employers that will generate both traineeships and permanent employment. This is felt to be particularly important because training is given in both interpreting and translation, so that students can be equipped to work in either discipline or, as is the case with many smaller employers, in both.

While students who find employment by responding to advertisements or passing open competitions do not benefit directly

from Bradford's links with employers but rather from the preparation provided by the course, there are two other routes into employment where these links can operate effectively. The first involves traineeships, which give employers an opportunity to assess both the qualities of an individual trainee and the standard of the parent institution. Even if there is no opening for a satisfactory trainee in a particular year, the ground may have been prepared for a student from a subsequent intake to obtain some more permanent form of employment. This leads to the second route in question, direct recruitment from Bradford by an employer. Such an arrangement is clearly of benefit to both parties, since it provides students with ready-made employment opportunities and enables employers to obtain qualified staff without spending time and money on lengthy recruitment processes.

The implications of direct recruitment will be considered in Chapters Six to Eight. At present, Bradford seems to have established one such link with the European Community agriculture organization COPA, which has filled its last three vacancies for translator-interpreters directly from the postgraduate course. It should be emphasized that the relationships between Bradford and employers are not solely dependent on the performance or behaviour of students, however. Visits are regularly made by teaching staff to organizations which host trainees and to other potential employers for discussions which serve not only to foster personal contacts but also to determine the likely future state of the employment market in general.

5.2.8 Statistics and student feedback

No general statistics were available concerning Bradford diplomates currently working as interpreters and/or translators. However, some effort has been made by the course authorities to monitor the early stages of their students' careers, and these records show a gradual move away from the commercial sector and towards international organizations.

In the information it supplied in February 1990, the DES indicated that no figures were available on the destinations of DES-funded finishers from the Bradford course for 1986-87. The relevant details were obtained from Bradford for the purposes of this project, however; using the DES classifications, they show that of the ten diplomates, six found employment in the subject area, one went into teaching and three entered other fields of employment. Two of the six students working as professional linguists were employed by the European Community, a third by a government department in the Federal Republic of Germany and another by a pharmaceuticals company; the last two were operating as freelances.

Questionnaires were completed by nine of the ten students who took the course in 1986-87. All had heard of the course through careers offices or academic staff at their previous universities. Six students had applied for other courses in interpreting and/or translation: two to Bath alone, three to Bath and PCL and one to Bath, PCL and Kent.

All the students expected to be able to earn their living as professional linguists, though one did not wish to do so. Eight had been interviewed or tested for employment, and two had already received firm job offers. All agreed that the course had enhanced their employment prospects.

On the whole, the views expressed on the contents of the course were similarly positive. There was widespread approval of the programme of simulated conferences, which some felt should be extended, and of the technical facilities available. The visits by professional interpreters and translators were regarded as particularly useful.

There were some reservations, however, concerning the teaching of interpreting. The general view was that it needed to be better structured, with more weight given to simultaneous and less to consecutive, and that rather too much time was devoted to translation at interpreting's expense. Several students felt that certain classes were less helpful than others, these views being summarized by the following comment: 'The curriculum should be kept to the core subjects of interpreting, translating and conversation - all other classes, i.e. summary, translation theory, documentation, etc. should be axed'.

5.3 Polytechnic of Central London (Translation)

5.3.1 Course aims and background

The Postgraduate Diploma in Technical and Specialised Translation was introduced in 1970 and is a one-year full-time course designed to help students meet the increasing demand for competent technical and specialised translators from companies in the United Kingdom and abroad, international organizations and translation agencies.

Students are initially required to offer any two of the five major languages taught, namely French, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish, and to possess a degree or the equivalent in these subjects. While the main aims of the course are to introduce students to desirable standards of professional specialized translation into English and to develop the practical skill of translating, on the basis of their major languages, great importance is attached to the acquisition of other languages for translation purposes. Experience at PCL has shown that it is possible, in the period of a year, for students to learn to translate competently from one or more new languages related to a known major language, thereby enhancing their subsequent prospects of employment. Hence all students are required to select at least one subsidiary language which will normally be related to one of the two main languages offered, for example Italian where French is known, Dutch with German, Czech with Russian and Portuguese with Spanish. Greek is included as an option available to any student. Although it is

possible to study German as a subsidiary language, those taking it must have A-level standard, unless demand indicates that a class for students with only O-level German would be viable. Otherwise, no previous knowledge of the subsidiary languages is expected, these being studied solely with a view to performing written translation. More than one such language may be taken, provided that in the Course Leader's opinion this will not prejudice a student's chances of gaining the diploma.

The size of intake for the course was originally determined by the number of DES bursaries available, which stood at 25 in the early 1970s. As the course has evolved, it has been found that from the organizational viewpoint the optimum number of students is around 30, but the number of bursaries allocated has now declined to 18. As a result, the course authorities look to fill 10 to 12 places each year with self-funding candidates. These tend to fall into two categories, the first being English native speakers from countries such as Canada and Australia who may well return there after the course, the second consisting of mature students either retraining for a new career or being financed by a working partner. While this high proportion of self-funding students serves to maintain the number of options and subsidiary languages that can be offered, it does perhaps raise the question of whether the overall quality of the intake is being diluted. Candidates may all compete on merit for the bursaries that are available, but a further dozen or so places are effectively reserved for applicants who are merely the best of those able to afford the course.

Another potential constraint on the overall quality of the intake is the need to balance the numbers of students taking the various language combinations. Given that virtually all candidates offer French as a major language, there are four possible pairings - French with German, Italian, Russian or Spanish. Because of internal departmental arrangements, all four combinations are run every year, without regard to fluctuations in the quality of applicants for particular pairings or in the perceived requirements of the employment market, with a target intake of eight students each for French with German and Spanish and six each for French with Italian and Russian. This inherent lack of flexibility is likely to mean, for example, that candidates will be accepted to fill the quotas for Italian and Russian who are less promising than others who meet the standards for the course but are excluded because of the greater competition for places in the German and Spanish intakes. Moreover, the Course Leader has acknowledged that the linguistic competence of applicants offering Italian and Russian, who have often learned these languages *ab initio* during a first degree course, is frequently inferior to that of their counterparts offering the more commonly taught languages. A further consequence of this quota system is that bursaries will be spread between the language combinations to guarantee that certain levels of places are taken up and thus that each combination can be run.

In defence of the system described above, it might be argued that the record of students in finding employment after the course has not provided any grounds for altering the existing intake arrangements. It could also be pointed out that good candidates

will not be turned away because their language combination happens not to be run in a particular year.

5.3.2 Selection procedures

The course is not advertised in the press, but relies on its reputation to attract applicants. Full details are circulated to careers offices at higher education establishments. There are usually around 200 applications, the great majority received during the autumn term preceding the course.

The selection process is a simple, if somewhat time-consuming one. Every applicant who fulfils the basic academic requirements for admission to the course is sent two test translation pieces, one in each main language offered. References are taken up on those who produce satisfactory translations and between 40 and 65 such candidates are then called for interview during the spring term. An initial group of 30 applicants will be offered places on the course, with 18 being recommended for DES bursaries.

The test pieces are each around 1,000 words long and are allocated in such a way that each applicant is given one technical text and another of a political, legal or financial nature. The technical passages usually relate to topics of which applicants might be expected to have some general knowledge, for example nuclear reactor technology, and will require a certain amount of research on the part of the translator without being particularly

specialized. No time limit is set for translating these test passages. The completed translations are scrutinized by the Course Leader, who is alone responsible for the entire selection procedure, unassisted by colleagues from inside or outside his department.

It is perhaps significant that even at this very first stage of assessing the test translations, the Course Leader is obliged to bear in mind the need to balance the quotas for the various language combinations as described in the previous section, a constraint which applies throughout the selection process.

Apart from such obvious considerations as use of English, spelling and presentation, the Course Leader attaches particular importance to the degree of thoroughness displayed by applicants in their approach to the test passages. From the overall style of the translation and the accuracy of the terminology used, it is normally easy to gauge the extent to which a candidate has familiarized himself with the subject in hand and used the appropriate glossaries.

References on applicants who pass this initial screening are taken up in the conventional way, with referees simply being asked to comment on applicants' suitability for the course. No special form is provided and there is no guidance as to the particular qualities being sought. On the basis of the test passages, references and the information provided on application forms, the Course Leader decides which candidates should be invited for interview. Some preference is given to applicants with a breadth of

qualifications, for example a non-language subsidiary element in their undergraduate course or even O-levels in technical subjects.

All interviews are conducted on a one-to-one basis by the Course Leader and last between an hour and an hour and a half. The atmosphere is informal, and a good deal of time is taken up by the Course Leader's explanations of how the course is run. His overall intention is to explore the candidates' motivation for wishing to become a translator and to assess their suitability for the profession in terms of temperament and personality. While objective criteria such as qualifications and performance in the test passages are naturally taken into account, the decision to accept or reject a candidate is largely based on the Course Leader's subjective assessment of that individual's potential as a translator, an instinct acquired during more than 20 years' experience in the profession.

In theory, all successful candidates are ranked on a waiting-list, with the top 18 eventually being nominated for DES bursaries, the next 12 being offered places without funding and the remainder having to await withdrawals. Firm offers with or without the promise of a bursary may be made immediately after an interview, however, either because of a wish to secure a particularly promising applicant or because of language quota considerations.

5.3.3 Course content and methodology

A distinction must first be drawn between the study of main and subsidiary languages. As regards the former, emphasis is placed on the techniques of approaching unfamiliar terminology and on providing a grounding in a variety of technical subjects, as described below. For the subsidiary languages, however, the primary aim is to teach a new language in such a way that students acquire a degree of passive knowledge which enables them to perform competent translations. Consequently, the three contact hours per week devoted to each subsidiary language are in the first term largely spent learning basic grammatical structures and elementary vocabulary. In the second and third terms, students move on to texts such as commercial letters, advertisements and articles from the press, with the level of difficulty gradually being increased. No attention whatever is paid to oral skills other than the basics of pronunciation. By the end of the course, students are capable of translating the same type of text as is used for work in main language classes, the teaching approach naturally being based on the source language rather than the content, however.

For the main languages, three areas of activity can be identified: non-technical translation, technical translation and workshops. Four contact hours per week are timetabled for translation classes in each language, with a further two hours per week set aside for workshops. In-house staff are responsible for teaching non-technical translation, which accounts for roughly a quarter of the translation programme as a whole and is regarded as

something of an extension of work in the final year of the PCL undergraduate course. The texts used cover political, economic and institutional subjects, together with some non-specialized elements of finance and law.

Technical translation is taught mostly by external staff employed on a part-time basis. Over the year of the course, students are introduced to 12 technical topics in each of their main languages and become acquainted with these to the extent that a platform is created for subsequent professional work. Approximately four weeks are spent on each topic, during which students receive an introductory lecture, study foreign-language texts on the subject, are given guidance on background reading and sources of information, and carry out translations in their own time. Additional lectures by specialist staff from other PCL departments are sometimes arranged, notably in engineering and law. The topics chosen vary from year to year depending on the availability of staff and may or may not overlap between languages, so that computer science, for example, might be dealt with in all five main languages, but agriculture only in Russian. Typical subjects are motor engineering, iron and steel production, company accounts and pharmaceutical research. The sequence of topics is structured so as to provide an element of progression, not only in terms of complexity but also to enable students to make use of knowledge acquired earlier in the course. For example, one of the most difficult topics in German is civil engineering, which is taken towards the end of the course and entails the practical application of principles of metallurgy studied the previous term. Apart from

broadening the students' technical knowledge and helping them overcome the obvious problems of terminology, a key aim of this translation programme is to train students in the technique of approaching a hitherto unknown subject and familiarizing themselves with it in such a way that they are able to produce a satisfactory translation for whatever type of user is involved.

The workshops are not specific to any one language and are thus an occasion for all the students on the course to come together for a variety of more general activities. These can take the form of visits to industrial establishments, talks from visiting translators on particular specialisms, an introduction to word-processing techniques or discussions on post-course employment possibilities. A frequently used exercise is to require students to research a particular subject - not necessarily technical - and give a brief presentation to the group.

This last activity demonstrates the emphasis placed on developing students' ability to tackle unfamiliar subject-matter and could be said to reflect a concern with that subject-matter itself rather than purely linguistic considerations, such an approach being a feature of the translation classes in general. A further illustration of the essentially practical nature of the course is the almost total absence of any element of translation theory or stylistics, despite the expertise available within PCL. While an occasional lecture on some aspect of translation theory may be arranged for the postgraduate students, this seems to be more as a

matter of general interest than as an integral component of the course.

5.3.4 Staff and resources

There are at present 18 teaching staff who contribute to the course, 13 of whom are engaged on a part-time basis from outside PCL. Of the five in-house staff, the Course Leader devotes the great majority of his working time to teaching on and administering the postgraduate course, while for his four colleagues the course represents something of a sideline, their main involvement being at undergraduate level.

As described in the previous section, the in-house staff are responsible for the non-technical translation classes; with the exception of the Course Leader, they have no experience of professional translation. In contrast, the part-time staff are all practising translators, mostly freelancers, with expertise in particular subject areas. They and the Course Leader take all the technical translation and subsidiary language classes, with some individuals teaching more than one language group or more than one technical topic.

The great advantage of this arrangement lies in its flexibility: given the concentration of translators in the London area, there is a relatively large number of specialists to draw on and students are offered a wide range of subsidiary language options (only three students are needed for a subsidiary language class to

be run). On the other hand, there is no guarantee that a particular individual will be available to teach on the course every year. In practice, variations in the lists of technical subjects dealt with are slight and the turnover in part-time staff is low; this is particularly so in the case of Russian, for which there is a smaller pool of professional translators.

The principal facility used by students on the course is the library of the Faculty of Languages, which has built up a large collection of technical journals and specialist glossaries covering all the main languages. For more detailed research, students have access to other departmental libraries, for example that of the Faculty of Engineering.

5.3.5 Practical experience

Virtually no arrangements are made for students to gain practical experience in translation departments during their postgraduate course. There are two reasons for this: firstly, it is felt that students should not be absent from any of the taught classes, so that placements could only be made during the Christmas or Easter vacations, periods deemed too short to be of significant value; secondly, placing all 30 or so students would be an impossible task, with the result that an element of discrimination would be introduced. However, it is possible for three or four students to spend up to two weeks of the Easter vacation in the translation department of a host company such as Shell. The Course

Leader regards these work experience programmes more as a means of fostering links with the companies involved than as a positive benefit for the students, the reaction from whom has been mixed.

In 1985, the group of host companies agreed to extend this work experience scheme into more formal traineeships, with the same number of students spending a full month with the companies shortly after completing their course at PCL. Also in 1985, traineeships were secured for the first time at European Community institutions in Brussels and Luxembourg for two PCL students to take up at a similar point. Competition for such places from other sources is intense, but at least one newly qualified student from PCL has obtained a Community traineeship in each subsequent year. These longer-term placements are an established introduction to the profession and do not interfere in any way with the running of the course; charges of discrimination carry much less weight, since teaching and examinations are over and many students will already have found permanent jobs.

5.3.6 Assessment

Assessment of students is based entirely on written examinations taken at the end of the course and two translation projects carried out in students' own time during the first two terms. There are no non-written tests, no papers in the theory of translation and no element of continuous assessment except in the consideration of border-line cases as described below.

In each main language, students sit three three-hour papers in each of which they are required to translate a passage of around 1,000 words. One passage is always on a technical topic dealt with during the course; another is always non-technical, again in a field covered in students' coursework; the third may be on any subject - frequently a further technical one to which students may or may not have been introduced. Students are informed shortly before the final examinations of the fields involved and are thus able to revise beforehand. They are allowed to bring whatever dictionaries, reference books and notes they wish into the examination room. The PCL authorities take the view that these arrangements enable an objective assessment to be made of students' performance by applying the yardstick of commercial acceptability, on the grounds that a professional translator would not normally be asked to work without access to reference materials.

Each translation is marked by the setter, an in-house member of staff and an external examiner. One external examiner is appointed for each main language, four of the current panel being professional translators and the fifth an academic. After this triple screening, a mark is awarded out of 100. While attention is obviously paid to linguistic accuracy, most importance is attached to students' ability to comprehend the subject-matter and thus clearly convey its meaning in their translations. The fact that reference materials are available means that problems of terminology can be solved, but choosing the appropriate term often requires a considerable degree of background knowledge, and it is the

demonstration of this broader quality which largely determines the examiners' conclusions.

To pass in a main language, students must obtain a total of at least 150 marks out of the possible 300. If they do so by scoring 50 or over on each paper, they pass automatically. At the other extreme, a mark of under 35 on any paper means overall failure, regardless of the other scores. The same applies when there are two marks under 50, even in the event of the third mark taking the total above 150. However, if a student scores 150 or more in total, but drops below 50 (not below 35) on only one paper, this may still be counted as a pass, subject to the approval of the Examinations Board. In deciding whether to ratify such border-line cases as passes, the Board takes into account a student's performance throughout the course and hears the views of the Course Leader. This procedure is applied in an average of ten cases each year and a decision to fail a student may be regarded as exceptional. Students are not informed of their marks on each paper and thus remain unaware of any difference between automatic and discretionary passes.

An additional complication is that the total marks in main languages may be boosted by students' performance in the translation projects. These consist of technical texts of around 2,500 words in each language chosen by the students themselves, approved by the Course Leader and translated over the first and second terms of the course. Students are often referred to companies which have links with PCL as potential sources of texts, and have on occasion even

been paid for their translations. Each project is marked out of 20 by one teacher on the course and any marks over 10 are added to the aggregate score on the three final examination papers. Since students are nevertheless required to score at least 50 marks on each of two papers in order to have a chance of passing, the only practical effects of any transfer of marks from a project might be to allow a student a slightly greater shortfall on the third paper or to favourably influence the Examinations Board in considering a border-line case.

Students also sit two three-hour translation papers in each subsidiary language. The first consists of a text of around 1,000 words on a technical subject, the second of a more general text of similar length. In both cases the level of difficulty is not as high as for the main language papers. The translations are marked only by the setter and with a view to assessing students' understanding of the foreign language rather than the subject-matter, which is in any case not particularly complex. The pass-mark is 50%, and it is necessary to achieve this on both papers to pass in the language as a whole.

The diploma is awarded only to students who pass in both main languages and at least one subsidiary language. Students who fail in one main language receive a letter certifying that they have attended the course and passed in one main language and any subsidiaries. It is rare for students to drop out of the course for academic reasons and only the occasional student fails to obtain the diploma.

5.3.7 Links with employers

The PCL course being heavily biased towards technical translation, students have hitherto been recruited mostly by commercial sector employers, often in the United Kingdom. Every effort is made to develop contacts with such firms, not only to increase the scope for channelling students into employment, but also to derive the maximum possible input for the course. As has been seen, firms are willing to supply translation material and to host students on group visits, brief work experience programmes or longer-term traineeships. They also provide speakers for translation workshops and are a source of external examiners.

Such contacts are founded on the established reputation of the course as a supplier of competent translators who have received a grounding in a variety of specialized fields and can frequently work from less widely known languages. With a supply of such qualified staff on tap, it is clearly in the employers' interest to recruit directly from the PCL course, thereby saving a great deal of time and money which would otherwise have been spent on advertising and interviewing without any guarantee of finding the right person for the job. It is therefore common practice for employers to approach the Course Leader directly with their requirements and an average of 15 posts are filled in this way each year, with the result that half of all students have full-time jobs to take up on completing the course.

In recent years, attempts have been made to foster links with international organizations, in particular the European Community institutions. While the recruitment procedures of these bodies generally preclude the direct approach described above, some success has been achieved in arranging traineeships and a small number of students have been engaged on temporary contracts.

5.3.8 Statistics

No long-term records are kept of students' career progress. In the short term, information is supplied to the DES on the initial job destinations of students holding bursaries. For the course in 1986-87, 17 of the 18 DES-funded finishers found employment in their subject area. The destination of the remaining student was unknown.

5.4 Polytechnic of Central London (Interpreting)

5.4.1 Course aims and background

The Postgraduate Diploma in Conference Interpretation Techniques was established in 1963 and is a two-term full-time course designed to provide professional training in simultaneous and consecutive conference interpreting to suitable candidates. The course was founded by Mrs P. Longley, formerly chief interpreter at UNESCO, and is one of only seven in the world to be officially recognised by AIIC (the Geneva-based Association Internationale des Interprètes de Conférence). For various administrative reasons, the course was not run in 1985-86 and at that time consideration was given to running it only in alternate years, but the polytechnic authorities subsequently decided that it should continue to be offered on an annual basis. Latest reports are, however, that the future of the course is once again in question following the departure of the Course Leader and tensions between the polytechnic and the interpreters who teach there.

The number of students accepted for the course has averaged 25, with a highest figure of 30 and a lowest of 20. As will be seen shortly, the combinations of languages offered by candidates and in demand on the interpreting market are a major factor in the selection process, but regardless of this consideration it is felt that 25 to 30 is a ceiling beyond which the course as a whole would tend to lose its collective identity and become rather a set of sub-courses only loosely held together. There are no financial

constraints on admissions policy, since the course does not carry DES bursaries or any other form of regular institutional funding, though UK graduates may be able to obtain discretionary awards from their Local Education Authorities. Very few applicants who are offered places on the course decline to take them up on the grounds of lack of funding.

In the 1960s, the course met an acute need on the part of United Nations bodies for personnel trained to interpret into English. With the development of the European Community and international contacts in general, however, as many as five 'A' or target languages have been run simultaneously, with up to ten passive or source languages. For a particular language combination to be covered in any year, there must be a minimum of three students for each language involved, as well as a perceived demand for interpreters proficient in that combination. The options available may be divided into three groups: European Community, United Nations and bilinguals with two target languages.

Candidates offering a combination of EC languages must have English and French plus two other official languages or, possibly, one other EC language plus a fourth non-EC language. In the UN group, English and French are again required, plus at least one other UN language; for the combinations English and Spanish into French and French and Spanish into English, however, a fourth language is a necessity. All bilingual applicants must have English and French; candidates who are bilingual in a combination other than English and French are thus also required to cover those languages.

The course is intended to be adaptable to market conditions, and special combinations not mentioned above can be considered in the light of prevailing circumstances. The exact nature of demand for interpreters is chiefly determined by the Course Leader who, as an active freelance, maintains close contact with the professional milieu. There is also considerable feedback from the senior interpreters who act as examiners at the end of the course. On a more formal level, regular approaches are made to employers of interpreters with a view to ascertaining changes in their requirements and recruiting practices.

5.4.2 Selection procedures

Recognition by AIIIC and the fact that it is the only course in the United Kingdom dealing exclusively with interpreter training have gained the PCL course a considerable reputation and removed the need for it to advertise. Around 120 candidates apply for admission to the course each year, up to 15% of whom are immediately rejected either on the grounds that their language combinations are unsuitable or because their linguistic ability is patently inadequate for the demands of interpreter training. The remaining 100 or so applicants who are sufficiently qualified and offer potentially viable language combinations are invited for interviews and tests in the course of the summer term. A fee of £50 is charged for taking the tests.

Applicants generally fall into the following categories: those who have just completed a first degree in modern languages; those currently working for national administrations or international bodies (who may be sponsored by their employers); graduates of a few years' standing who have yet to settle on a career; older applicants seeking a new career or returning after a temporary absence from the employment market, for example to bring up a family. This last category is usually the smallest. Applications are received from a wide range of countries throughout the English-speaking world, Europe, Africa and South America.

The tests are extremely time-consuming, being held on up to 15 days each year, with seven or eight applicants attending a typical session. They are derived in part from a study carried out at PCL in the late 1970s which was intended to develop and assess a set of psychometric tests to aid selection of interpreter trainees. A full description of this project is contained in Gerver, Longley, Long and Lambert (1984). Some of the more accurate predictors of subsequent performance have been incorporated in the current battery of tests, with slight modifications to take account of the practicalities of administration.

The morning of a testing day is devoted to these predictive exercises, with booth tests and interviews being held in the afternoon. The first test is a series of written translations, with applicants having two hours in which to translate texts from each of their passive languages into their target language. For candidates with more than one target language, individual instructions are .

given as to which passive languages are to be translated into which target language. The texts are non-technical, 400 to 500 words long and moderately difficult, including elements specifically designed to test the depth of applicants' linguistic knowledge; dictionaries are not allowed. It is explained to applicants at the outset that they should endeavour to translate enough material from each of their passive languages to demonstrate their proficiency, without necessarily finishing each text. This exercise is thus seen both as a language test and as a means of assessing applicants' ability to organize their work to meet a defined objective. A candidate who produced excellent complete translations from two passive languages but had barely started on the third passage would automatically be rejected.

The second test is designed to measure applicants' powers of memory and analysis. Two passages are played on a tape recorder, the first in English lasting about three minutes and the second in French lasting a minute and a half. After listening to each passage without taking notes, applicants are required to write a summary, in their target language, of the arguments they contain. The style of the texts is deliberately dense, with the essential links of cause and effect obscured by a plethora of abstract concepts. Subjects have included the origins of desertification and the spiral of Third World debt.

The next series of exercises is a test of candidates' general knowledge in relation to their languages, together with their speed

of response. They are given 30 minutes to complete a paper consisting of seven sections, details of which are as follows:

- name three newspapers published in each language offered, three modern authors writing in those languages and one of their works;
- name the countries corresponding to a list of six national parliaments (e.g. the Knesset, the Cortes);
- name two political figures who currently play an important role in ten countries (including less obvious choices such as Kenya and Egypt);
- name the capital cities of ten countries (e.g. Ethiopia, Indonesia);
- state the event or circumstance associated with a list of ten terms or to what their acronyms refer (e.g. Sharpeville, CAP);
- indicate the cities in which a list of 17 organizations have their headquarters and what their initials stand for;
- give as many synonyms as possible, up to a maximum of five, for five words in English (e.g. agreement, adopt) and five in French (e.g. bonheur, demander).

This concludes the morning session and all the test papers are then marked immediately, so that account may be taken of the results during the interviews and booth tests in the afternoon. Applicants are seen individually for these exercises, which are conducted in the presence of four or five people - the Course Leader, an assessor for each language being tested (either a member of staff or a teacher of interpreting from outside the polytechnic) and a native speaker who reads out the passages for interpretation. The interview and interpreting elements overlap considerably, with questions being put to the candidate before, during and after their performances in the booth. These begin with an exercise in 'shadowing', that is listening to brief passages of discourse first in the target language and then in each passive language and simply repeating them verbatim, with the passages gradually being increased in length.

The candidates then move on to interpreting passages of a general nature from each of their passive languages. These texts are read at slow speed by the native speaker and, while not particularly complex, are designed to become progressively more difficult and to allow the assessors to gauge whether applicants are operating merely on the individual words they hear or on a more conceptual level. Certain passages are specifically written so as to be virtually impossible to interpret word for word and to demand a reformulation of the ideas which underlie the text. During these tests, which last 20 to 25 minutes for each applicant, the assessors frequently interrupt the interpretation to confront the candidate with his inadequacies or mistakes.

At the end of the day of tests, the assessors will have completed a lengthy scoresheet for each applicant, providing the basis for an overall judgment on acceptance. There are four main sections, covering the written translations, memory and general knowledge tests, interpreting and general interview behaviour, with various subdivisions. All marking is on scales from 0 to 4, except for the general knowledge papers, and spaces are provided throughout for comments by the assessors.

The written translations are marked on three separate counts: clarity, the extent to which the meaning of the original has been conveyed and the candidate's ease of expression in the target language. The section dealing with general interview behaviour comprises nine different indicators, but assessors are instructed only to mark those characteristics which become apparent during the interview, so that only the more overt aspects of candidates' behaviour are likely to be noted. The subdivisions are as follows: conduct under stress; reaction to criticism; degree of assertiveness; degree of aggression; ability to listen; precision of answers to questions; personal appearance; bluffing ability; self-confidence. In the interpreting tests, three separate marks are given for the shadowing exercise, covering pronunciation, fluency and speed, with a fourth rating on accent for bilinguals. Simultaneous performance likewise carries four marks, relating to structure and grammar, vocabulary, fluency and pronunciation. There is also a section dealing with the candidate's voice, with scale marks for volume and pleasantness and space for comments on regional accents and any peculiarities.

The final decision on acceptance lies with the Course Leader, who acknowledges that the weighting of the various elements involved in the selection procedure is not applied in such an objective or scientific way as the origins of the tests themselves might be taken to imply. Given that all the applicants will display gaps in their general knowledge and probably some deficiencies in language ability, the first task is to screen out the entirely unacceptable candidates, as opposed to those who deserve to be considered further on the basis of their overall performance. This may be done in the light of any particularly poor showings in the written translations, general knowledge paper or interpreting tests. For the remaining candidates, the principal criterion applied is the Course Leader's own instinctive assessment, based on many years of professional experience, of their performance in the booth tests, in particular their ability to interpret ideas rather than simply offer an oral translation.

Apart from acting as a screening element, the tests conducted in the morning sessions retain something of their original predictive role, since experience has shown that their results do tend to be confirmed by the booth tests. Moreover, it has become clear that reasonable marks on both sets of tests are required if a candidate is to stand a good chance of successfully completing the course; border-line candidates who in the past have been accepted for the course on the basis of a good performance in the booth tests but who fared less well on the language, memory and general knowledge exercises have more often than not failed to obtain their final diploma.

Finally, it should be emphasized that all candidates are measured against the standard which they would have to attain in order to pass the examinations held at the end of the course. They are not assessed as if in direct competition with each other during the selection procedure.

Only when all testing has been completed can the Course Leader establish which applicants will be offered places, since until that point it is impossible to determine which language combinations will be run. A complex equation thus has to be resolved in which the factors are conditions on the employment market, the quality of applicants and the various active and passive languages which they offer. This process inevitably gives rise to difficulties; for instance, it may well be that the decision whether to run one particular target language rather than another is conditioned more by the range of accompanying passive languages than by the perceived demand for the target language itself or by the merits of the respective applicants.

5.4.3 Course content and methodology

Since the course only lasts two terms, it is necessarily highly intensive and concentrates exclusively on the development of interpreting skills. At its core is a daily two-hour class in general consecutive interpretation for all students, whatever their language combinations. At the very beginning of this series of classes, students are given a brief introduction by the Course

Leader to the principles of comprehension and meaning, in which particular stress is laid on the importance of conveying concepts rather than merely words. Thereafter, however, the curriculum as a whole is entirely devoted to practical work.

These daily consecutive classes are based on presentations by students in which they speak for 15 minutes on a subject prepared in advance. The topics are chosen by students from a list posted at the beginning of the course, and for each subject they must provide a glossary in all their working languages covering potentially difficult terms. The programme of presentations is carefully structured, so that in the first two weeks the major countries of the world are covered, followed by international organizations and general political topics, gradually increasing in complexity. In the second term, more technical matters are dealt with in the fields of finance, economics, law and computer technology.

Initially, the students simply give back the presentation in the original language from their notes, but after the first week of the course they move on to consecutive interpretation as such, each being called upon to perform in turn. The pattern is varied every Friday, with the presentations being replaced by a debate. This is the activity most closely resembling authentic practice, although the numbers of students and different language combinations make it a difficult logistic exercise. The layout of the facilities makes it possible to integrate the consecutive classroom with the simultaneous interpreting suite, so that some students may practise in booths while others take notes, possibly in relay from a language

being interpreted simultaneously. This latter exercise - interpreting from the original into a second language and from that into a third - is also deliberately included in the normal consecutive classes in order to create an awareness of the difficulties in comprehension and losses of information which may occur as a result of the interpreting process.

In addition to the ten hours of general consecutive work, students attend four hours of classes per week in consecutive interpretation from each of their passive languages. Similarly, four hours' tuition in simultaneous interpreting are provided each week for each passive language offered, making a theoretical total of 34 contact hours per week. Extra classes are provided for bilinguals with fewer passive languages. Needless to say, there are enormous administrative difficulties in arranging classes for such a wide range of language combinations, taking account of the facilities available and the individual circumstances of a variety of external teaching staff. Hence there are inevitably a number of timetable clashes which reduce the total of actual teaching hours to around 30 per week for each student and make it necessary, on occasion, for students to choose between two classes which they are meant to attend but which are taking place at the same time.

Classes in simultaneous interpretation begin from the first day of the course with 'shadowing' exercises in all languages using texts of a procedural nature such as the introduction to a meeting. These serve the purpose of accustoming the students to listening and speaking at the same time while also acquainting them with a perhaps

unfamiliar area of vocabulary which is indispensable for future work. By the second week, students are able to move on to interpreting into their target language. A deliberate attempt is made to link the simultaneous classes thematically to those in consecutive, with the programme of presentation topics being circulated to all the relevant teaching staff. The material used by teachers of both simultaneous and consecutive interpretation is drawn from the records of actual meetings.

No single or unified methodological approach to the teaching of interpreting is adopted on the course. This would in any case be extremely difficult, given that a large number of external teaching staff are employed who are likely to have their own particular views on the matter. The one principle that is rigorously upheld is that interpreting can only be taught by interpreters: professional experience is regarded as essential in order to recognize and overcome the various difficulties with which students will be confronted, not only linguistic but also technical or situational. Only an experienced practitioner will fully appreciate that successful performance lies in the achievement of a balance between the abilities of the interpreter and the constraints of his working environment.

Apart from some brief demonstrations of technique by the Course Leader in the early stages of the course, there is no attempt to hold up the teaching staff as models for the students to follow. Interpreting is deemed too subjective an activity for such a practice to be successful: by seeking to conform to a model,

students may fail to see that the best solution for them lies along a completely different path. In accordance with this philosophy, no particular method of note-taking is recommended for consecutive work; students are left to evolve the system which suits them best.

Teaching methods are generally based on the simple technique of picking up examples - identifying what is satisfactory and what could be improved and suggesting alternative solutions. In consecutive classes, the students' performances and teachers' comments are naturally heard by all those present; in simultaneous classes, students interpret for around 20 minutes, then listen to a recording of their performance. Teachers monitor individuals for varying periods, normally commenting to them directly, but occasionally interrupting the class to make a more general point. There is a preference for live delivery of source material as opposed to tapes, since this personalizes the discourse and more closely resembles actual working conditions.

Very little practice takes place outside the organized classes. This is firstly because the polytechnic's regulations prohibit the use of facilities such as the interpreting suite unless a member of staff is present and secondly because 30 hours of interpreting work per week leave the students mentally tired. Nevertheless, it has been found that some students, notably the more promising ones, meet informally at weekends to practise consecutive interpretation amongst themselves.

5.4.4 Staff and resources

All the teaching staff are recruited externally on a part-time basis with the exception of the Course Leader, who nevertheless also continues to work as a freelance interpreter and whose only in-house duties are the organization and administration of the course. This latter arrangement has given rise to certain internal tensions at PCL concerning the Course Leader's status within the polytechnic.

In principle, all the teachers are practising London-based members of AIIC. For some language combinations, however, there are simply no interpreters available in London, and in these cases language teachers are used. Account also has to be taken of professional commitments, since offers of interpreting work will normally take precedence over part-time teaching at the polytechnic. Thus while one particular interpreter may be regarded as the first choice for taking, say, the classes in simultaneous interpretation from German into English, it may be necessary for him to be replaced on several occasions and perhaps not always by the same person. What might be regarded as a lack of cohesion in this system is in fact seen as an advantage for the students, on the grounds that they are exposed to a wider variety of styles and voices than might otherwise be the case. An element of continuity is provided by the linkage of topics based on the core sessions of consecutive interpreting, as discussed above.

The technical resources at PCL consist of a 16-booth interpreting suite and several conventional language laboratories.

Students also have access to word-processing facilities for compiling glossaries. While a substantial collection of teaching material has been built up over the years, this is not readily available to students for practice for the reasons set out in the previous section.

5.4.5 Practical experience

In such a short and intensive course devoted solely to the acquisition and development of interpreting skills, there is simply no time available for allowing students to gain practical experience in a working environment, even if this were easily arranged. Once students have completed the course, they are seeking paid employment rather than opportunities for further practice or observation and thus there is no history of traineeships or other placements associated with the course.

5.4.6 Assessment

At the end of the course, students are assessed by a panel of professional staff interpreters from international organizations, often Chief Interpreters or Heads of Conference Services. In deciding which members of staff to send as examiners, however, the organizations concerned will take account of the language combinations which are currently in demand or of interest to them.

The final examination consists of one exercise in consecutive and two in simultaneous interpreting from each passive language offered. All the material used is delivered live by native speakers. In the consecutive exercise, the texts are of a general nature and are supplied by the examiners. However, some examiners prefer to improvise a speech on the spot to simulate actual working conditions.

One simultaneous exercise is also a general text chosen by the examiners. For the other, the Course Leader draws up several weeks in advance two lists of four or more specialized subjects taken from those dealt with during the course. The first list covers economic or legal subjects, the second technical ones such as nuclear engineering, health care or plastics. Students may then choose a topic for their final examination in each passive language, the only restriction being that they must take at least one subject from each list. The Course Leader and other teaching staff select the texts to be used in the examinations, all of which are genuine speeches taken from records of meetings.

No guidelines are issued to the examiners, who simply judge the students against the standards applied when recruiting interpreters for their organization. Nor is a pass-mark set by the course authorities: the examiners do not in fact award marks in the conventional way, but merely pass or fail the students in each language. The only element of latitude is in certain border-line cases where the examiners may indicate that a student is not yet employable to work from a particular language, but could become so

with further practice or training. Such an assessment reflects a linguistic weakness rather than a lack of aptitude for interpreting, and it is possible in these cases for a student to retake the examination the following year, after repeating the second term of the course.

To obtain the diploma, it is necessary to pass the examination in all the languages offered. The difficulty which this presents for candidates who have studied two languages in depth over a longer period and subsequently acquired a third, perhaps with a view to gaining admission to the course, is reflected in the high failure rate in the final examination. The overall failure rate for the course lies between 40 and 45%, with a highest figure of 50% and a lowest of 35%. In the five years from 1980-81 to 1984-85, a total of 128 students took the course, 77 of whom passed, a failure rate of 40%. It is felt by the teaching staff that the failure rate is partly determined by the prevailing market conditions, since when demand for interpreters is low, the examiners will tend to be stricter in their assessments than when the opposite applies.

5.4.7 Links with employers

Students benefit from a wide range of contacts with the professional milieu through the Course Leader and other teaching staff working in the freelance market. The only formal links with employers are through the visiting examiners, however, who to some extent are looking out for potential recruits. Otherwise, there are

no established short-cuts into work and students who successfully complete the course are required to take the same tests as any other would-be interpreters. It should be borne in mind that a certain proportion of students, particularly those from overseas, are sponsored by their employers and thus move straight into posts at the end of the course.

5.4.8 Statistics

While some attempt is made to keep track of all students who take the course, there is no systematic long-term record of how many former students are working as interpreters. In the short term, virtually all those students who obtain the diploma do find work, though some will initially combine interpreting with another activity such as freelance translation. The Course Leader's impression is that around 60% of diplomates eventually succeed in earning their living from interpreting. No statistics are kept on students' performances according to target language or native country; one impression offered by the Course Leader is that the small number of recent UK graduates who succeed in gaining admission to the course tend to be particularly successful.

5.5 University of Kent

5.5.1 Course aims and background

The Postgraduate Diploma in Vocational Techniques for Career Linguists was introduced in 1973 and is a one-year full-time course intended for modern language graduates of English mother tongue who wish to obtain professional training in specialized translation, translating techniques and other applications of foreign language skills, with a view to using languages in a future career either as a translator in industry or in an international organization, or as an executive operating in the European context. The aim of the course is to introduce students to the type of work undertaken by career linguists and to make them aware of professional standards.

Languages are taught at three levels - major, minor and *ab initio* - and may be taken in a variety of combinations. Students take either two or, preferably, three languages including at least one of those offered at major level, namely French, German and Russian. An honours degree in the appropriate language is required; students holding combined degrees in French and German, German and Russian or French and Russian may elect to take the two corresponding majors. Alternatively, a student's second language (and third, if applicable) may be taken either at minor level or *ab initio*. The languages offered at minor level, for which an initial standard of at least GCE 'A' level is required, are French, German, Russian and Italian; those offered *ab initio* are Dutch, Russian and Turkish, with Dutch being restricted to students who have some

knowledge of German. While all three levels of language work have equal status in the course and the examination, the structure of assessment makes it necessary for students to identify their two principal languages early in the course.

A particular advantage of this system is that holders of single honours degrees need not be deterred from applying for admission to the course, since it is open to them to pursue other languages at less advanced levels. Indeed, such is the flexibility of the three-tier course structure that combinations which are unusual at postgraduate level may be arranged: it has been known, for example, for a student to take French as a major language, combined with Russian and Turkish *ab initio*.

In recent years, the number of DES bursaries made available for the course has alternated between 11 and 12, supplemented on occasion by others awarded by the authorities in Scotland and Northern Ireland. In addition, one or two self-funding students generally take the course each year. The highest number of students to have been admitted to a course is 20, the lowest 11, with the current expected annual intake lying between 15 and 17.

Places on the course are not awarded on the basis of quotas for particular languages at any level, but purely on applicants' merit as potential career linguists. Nevertheless, the course authorities do endeavour to avoid training too many students in language combinations for which there is relatively little perceived demand, and thus adjust their selection criteria accordingly.

5.5.2 Selection procedures

The course is advertised in the national press and details are widely circulated to careers offices at universities and polytechnics. There are normally around 100 applications per year, which are subjected to an initial screening process designed to eliminate applicants who are unlikely to be suitable for the course. This decision is based entirely on information given on the application form and references obtained by standard means; no test translation passages are sent out. In principle, all the remaining candidates are invited to attend for interviews and tests.

A testing session consists of a general interview with the Course Tutor, followed by a series of tests and separate interviews covering the languages offered by applicants and a test on use of English. Apart from providing an initial impression of each candidate, the general interview - conducted in English - is designed to assess their motivation and adaptability, since the course is essentially seen by those who run it as a process of converting graduates with traditional arts-based backgrounds into prospective career linguists able to operate in a technical environment.

The interviews and tests in individual languages are primarily intended to establish applicants' language ability rather than to gauge their potential as translators. While the pattern of exercises varies between languages, the basic framework consists of a conversation in the foreign language, an oral translation or aural

comprehension test and one or more written translations. For languages in which applicants hold a degree and which are therefore likely to be taken at major level, the oral exercise is normally a passage for on-sight translation to be delivered after a brief perusal of the text. The written translations from such languages are generally semi-technical passages totalling around 50 lines, the time allowed for which varies according to difficulty and length. The use of dictionaries is not permitted. For languages to be taken at minor level, the tests are correspondingly less demanding. There is likely to be an aural comprehension exercise instead of an on-sight translation, the texts for written translation are shorter and more general in nature, and dictionaries may be used.

The use of English test is taken by all applicants and contains a battery of different exercises. In one, candidates are given an example of an inadequate translation from French of a product description currently used by a manufacturer, such as for a range of footwear. They are required to write a revised version of the text, retaining all the points made, but without access to the French original. Another separate exercise is one in which as many synonyms as possible have to be given in 15 minutes for each of eight nouns (e.g. strength, opinion) and eight verbs (e.g. think, begin). The remaining tests are grouped together in a longer paper and involve such exercises as supplying adjectives (with the general meaning of 'great') that are most commonly used with a list of 20 nouns (e.g. a victory, an liar) and likewise supplying verbs associated with certain nouns (e.g. to doubts, to a complaint).

As candidates complete each stage of testing, their performances are recorded on a marksheet, so that at the end of the day an overall assessment and final recommendation are possible. The marksheet has two sections, covering language ability and general comments. Under language ability, there are three separate headings, for expression and pronunciation, comprehension and translation. On the first two, examiners write their own assessments, but translations must be graded on a scale of 1 (excellent) to 6 (totally unacceptable). The section on general comments also has three subheadings: motivation, personal qualities and overall impression, including general bearing and presentability. There are no scales or other guidelines, simply space for the examiners' remarks.

At the foot of the completed marksheet, the Course Tutor will recommend acceptance or rejection and, where appropriate, indicate whether the candidate should be placed high, in the middle or low on the list for DES bursaries, or kept on the reserve list. In arriving at these decisions, the Course Tutor takes a broad view of candidates' overall profiles, while applying certain subjective criteria derived from several years' experience in running the course. As already indicated, motivation and intellectual flexibility are seen as particularly important, and more weight is attached to ability in the foreign languages than performance in the use of English tests. On the basis of past experience, there is some prejudice against applicants claiming to be bilingual and against those from certain polytechnics at which the undergraduate programmes are felt to be an unsuitable preparation for the course.

Since there are no language quotas to be considered, it is possible for the best candidates to be offered places on the course, with bursaries attached, very shortly after testing. Others will be held on a reserve list pending completion of the selection procedure, though obviously the longer the delay in making firm offers, the greater the risk that good applicants will be offered places elsewhere or make different plans. Ultimately, there is no difficulty in filling places on the course which carry government funding, but any dilution of the quality of the student intake would be unwelcome.

5.5.3 Course content and methodology

The course consists of four elements: language study at the various levels described above, translation theory and the use of English, lectures by visiting speakers, and ancillary courses in particular technical fields.

At major level, the teaching programmes vary somewhat between the three languages offered, though each provides students with a basic total of six hours' tuition per week throughout the course. The programme for French consists of four separate units, taught by different members of staff. The first, occupying one hour a week, is a series of classes designed to serve as an introduction to professional standards of translation of technical and specialized material, beginning with fairly elementary mechanical engineering texts and progressing to passages covering a wider and more

complicated range of subjects. The mechanical engineering topics are closely linked both to the corresponding unit in the German programme and to the practical demonstrations and lectures in English described below in connection with the ancillary courses

The second unit is taught for two hours per week and is a general translation class aimed at broadening students' experience of translating non-literary texts and developing their awareness of style and register both in English and French. There are also occasional exercises in comparative translation and summarising in English. A rough balance is struck between the use of journalistic texts on the one hand and administrative ones on the other.

The third unit, taught for one hour a week by a native speaker, is entitled 'French language background and practice' and consists of three types of activity aimed at improving students' competence in the foreign language: (a) the discussion of areas of French culture or terminology which are either not covered in the translation classes or are likely to be unfamiliar to students, such as the French legal system or the operation of central and local government; (b) press review seminars in which the students, either individually or in groups of two or three, report on the French press coverage of some major issue, followed by a general discussion in French; (c) seminars prepared by the students in which short English passages such as advertisements or product descriptions are translated into French and then compared and discussed.

Lastly, the fourth unit entails two hours per week of practice in on-sight translation and interpreting. The inclusion of an interpreting element in what is essentially a specialized translation course is due to the fact that the course authorities have recognized that staff translators, particularly in the private sector, are not infrequently called upon to act as interpreters. Moreover, apart from providing practice in this aspect of a translator's work, the interpreting exercises are seen as a useful means of sharpening students' linguistic reflexes. The modes of interpreting practised are restricted to those likely to be encountered in professional life, namely consecutive and liaison, with the latter including interpreting into French.

The German programme also consists of four units, the first of which corresponds exactly to its counterpart in the French programme and is normally taught by the same person. In the second unit, one hour a week is spent translating texts dealing with science, technology and major industries. The fields covered include petrol and diesel engineering, glass and optics, refrigeration and shipping. Much emphasis is placed on the need for students to research the background to the texts and achieve a thorough understanding of the equipment and processes involved.

The third unit provides practice in oral translation both from and into German using oral and written sources, with the collaboration of a native speaker. Two hours per week are spent on classwork and a third in a language laboratory. In the final unit,

one hour a week is devoted to a translation class covering the register of economic journalism.

For students taking either French or German at major level, there is an additional class of one hour a week in each language dealing with comparative translation. This entails the study of parallel texts covering a wide range of industrial and specialized subjects, using passages which have been translated commercially or in the translation departments of major companies.

The structure of the Russian programme is simpler, with four hours per week of classwork, one hour in a language laboratory and one hour of videotaped material, all taught by the same member of staff. The aim is to develop students' expertise in translating the following types of material: socio-political articles; scientific and technological texts; instructions and specifications; news broadcasts and radio reports; commercial correspondence. Some practice is given in working into Russian.

At minor level, students of French, German and Russian to a large extent follow the same programme as their counterparts at major level, with some modifications to take account of their lower standard of linguistic competence. Besides simplifying the administrative arrangements for the course, this system has the advantage of facilitating transfers between the two levels in the light of students' progress. Thus in French, the programme is identical to that for the major group, except that separate classes may be held for the unit 'French language background and practice'

and different exercises may be arranged for the course in on-sight translation and interpreting.

Likewise in German, minor-level students take three of the major units described above, with the fourth, covering oral translation, reduced to one hour a week of classwork plus one hour in a language laboratory. Students taking Russian once again attend the major-level classes, with the emphasis being shifted slightly towards improvement of their knowledge of the language.

The situation is evidently different for Italian, which may only be taken as a minor language. There are five hours of tuition per week, broken down as follows: one hour of on-sight translation and interpreting (including work into Italian); two hours of general translation classes; one hour involving the preparation and discussion of videotaped material, together with summarizing exercises both from and into Italian; a one-hour class in technical translation.

The *ab initio* courses in Dutch and Turkish each comprise five contact hours per week, that in Russian six, in addition to which students are expected to spend a considerable amount of time in private study. All the languages are taught with the emphasis on translation, but students are also intended to become able to express themselves in writing and to engage in everyday conversation with reasonable fluency. All the courses combine language laboratory work with translation exercises in class.

The second major component of the course bears the overall title 'The translation process and the use of English'. It consists of separate courses in four subjects: stylistics, translation theory, journalistic English, and précis writing and abstracting. The classes in translation theory occupy one hour a week for ten weeks; those in the other subjects are taught one hour a week for five weeks.

The stylistics course aims, by means of practical examples and a very limited amount of theory, to develop students' awareness of and sensitivity to the effects of variation in English. In contrast to this essentially practical approach, the course in translation theory is an introduction to study of the meaning and nature of translation conducted entirely on a theoretical level. The two remaining courses are grouped together under the heading 'English as a target language' and run concurrently during the Christmas term. One examines the language of journalism, with special emphasis on headlines and economic writing; the other, in précis writing, aims at giving intensive practice in the handling of non-literary English, together with instruction in note-taking and the writing of abstracts.

A number of guest speakers are invited to lecture during the course, mainly in the first and second terms. Such visitors have included senior staff translators from ICI, ITT, Shell, the CEGB and the BBC Monitoring Unit.

Finally, various ancillary courses are provided with a view to widening students' knowledge of areas covered in the language programmes. Perhaps the most important of these is the course in engineering appreciation, a two-hour class run during the first half of each of the first two terms at Canterbury College of Technology. As already mentioned, this is closely coordinated with the classes in French and German technical translation and enables students to gain first-hand knowledge of a series of engineering topics ranging from basic items like the internal combustion engine to complex equipment such as computer-controlled machine tools. The approach is entirely practical and no previous knowledge of engineering is assumed.

In addition, visits are arranged to industrial firms in the area and, where possible, to translation departments, in order to provide an insight into the workings of such departments within the framework of industry. Host organizations have included British Coal and Unilever.

During the first two terms, a weekly course is run on the use of computers in language work, concentrating on word-processing techniques and the development of terminology data bases. The University Computing Laboratory also offers a course in computing for humanities students which occupies three contact hours per week, combining lectures, seminars and practical classes. Special lectures on other subjects are occasionally given to the course by staff from relevant departments of the University, for example in economics and accounting.

5.5.4 Staff and resources

The staff responsible for teaching the course are generally academics rather than ex-translators, though as much use as possible is made of visiting professionals and for a number of years the units involving technical translation from French and German were taught on a consultancy basis by a former Chief Translator at ICI. While some members of staff teach only one or two hours per week on the course, others contribute a substantial part of their overall workload. This applies particularly to those teaching the *ab initio* languages. All the Russian classes are taken by the same person, who also teaches the précis-writing unit; it should be borne in mind, however, that Russian is no longer taught at undergraduate level at Kent.

One of the rooms in the Institute of Languages and Linguistics building is allocated as a base for members of the course and also serves as a reference library. Because of the need to safeguard the contents of the latter, however, it is only available during working hours and is kept locked after 5 p.m. The other facility available to students for private study use is one of the five language laboratories, again during normal working hours only. Another language laboratory is equipped for interpreting practice (though not with booths for simultaneous interpreting).

There is a library of taped material which may be borrowed for private study, and a small number of tape machines for listening

only are available for loan to members of the course, with priority being given to those following *ab initio* programmes.

5.5.5 Practical experience

Apart from the visits to translation departments referred to above, no attempt is made to place students in a working environment for the purpose of gaining practical experience and there is little history of students obtaining traineeships or other forms of extended placement after completing the course. Links with employers are fostered with other aims in mind, as described in the relevant section below.

5.5.6 Assessment

While there is no element of continuous assessment involved in the awarding of the diploma, which is based solely on students' performance in the final examinations, a prerequisite for admission to the latter is the completion of a specified amount of required coursework and a translation project. This coursework does not represent all the day-to-day translation exercises and general preparation of classes, but rather a series of designated assignments distributed over the components of the course. Five such assignments are attached to each language taken, at whatever level, and two to the 'Translation process and use of English' section. Just as the composition of each language programme differs

to some extent, so the spread of assignments varies between the languages. Hence there are two assignments in French on-sight translation and interpreting, but only one in the German oral translation unit. Some units do not carry assignments at all.

The marks given to assignments are based on the same principles as are applied in the diploma examination. However, they are not collated with the marks awarded in the latter except for the marks for the two assignments in the 'Translation process and use of English' section, which count for 10% of the final total. The course authorities see this as a useful system, in that it gives students an indication of their progress in the various sections of the course while allowing them a certain amount of freedom to experiment, without feeling constrained by the pressure to achieve a certain level of marks.

The translation project consists of an extended translation of approximately 5,000 words from one major language into English, together with the compilation of an accompanying glossary. The material for translation is chosen by each student and approved by the Course Tutor by the end of the first term of the course. No precise guidelines are laid down regarding subject-matter, but it is expected to be economic, scientific or technological rather than political or sociological. A typical source would be a recent article from a specialist journal. The deadline for submission of the completed project is the end of the first week of the third term.

The diploma examination is held in late May and early June and comprises, for each language, two three-hour written translation papers and various aural/oral examinations. One translation paper consists of one or more highly technical passages, for which dictionaries may be used. The material selected for the second paper, though still of a generally technical nature, is considerably less complex and the use of dictionaries is not allowed. An example of this latter type of text is a set of instructions for a domestic appliance. The aural/oral examinations differ slightly between languages, but generally consist of an aural comprehension test, an on-sight translation and a liaison interpreting exercise. The level of difficulty of all the tasks set in the examination is obviously adjusted to take account of the programme followed by the candidates - major, minor or *ab initio*.

It is at this stage that the choice of principal languages becomes significant, since these two sets of marks form the core of students' assessment. In each principal language, the marks for the translation papers are reduced to a single mark out of 40 and those for the aural/oral tests to a single mark out of 5, making a total of 90 marks for the examination, to which are added 10 from the coursework assignments in the 'Translation process and use of English' section. The marks awarded for the third language, if taken, are reduced in a similar way to a single mark out of 45. If this figure is the same as, or lower than, the average of the two corresponding marks awarded for the principal languages, the candidate's aggregate mark out of 100 is not affected. If it is higher than that average, however, the aggregate mark is raised by

the difference between that average and the average of the higher of the principal language marks and the mark for the third language.

To give an illustration, a candidate scoring 26 and 24 on his principal languages has an average mark of 25. To be eligible for any increase in his aggregate mark, he must therefore score at least 26 on his third language. If he scores 28 on that language, the average of that mark and the higher of the principal language marks is 27, two higher than the average of the principal language scores. The candidate's aggregate mark out of 100 will therefore be increased by two.

To obtain the diploma, a candidate requires an aggregate mark of at least 40 out of 100 and also a mark of at least 40% in the examinations for each of his principal languages (i.e. a mark of at least 18 out of 45). Candidates scoring between 60 and 69 out of 100 are awarded the diploma with merit, and those scoring 70 out of 100 and over obtain a pass with distinction.

Very few students drop out of the course; failures in the diploma examination, before which a substantial amount of work must have been completed, are extremely rare.

5.5.7 Links with employers

As has already been described, various contacts are maintained with employer bodies, particularly those with local offices, with a

view to obtaining inputs to the course. However, the main thrust of efforts to foster links with employers is directed towards exploiting future employment possibilities. This is done by keeping track as far as possible of the whereabouts of former students, remaining in touch with them and consciously seeking to develop a good relationship with their employers.

The content of the course reflects its aim of preparing students first and foremost to work as translators in the commercial sector or in relatively specialized departments. Since these are indeed the most common initial job destinations of students who find work immediately after completing the course, it is not surprising that the relationships established with employers are almost exclusively in such fields. These links are by no means restricted to UK employers, however, as a considerable number of students from Kent find work in Europe, particularly in the German-speaking countries. Despite the fact that a small number of former students have subsequently obtained posts in international organizations by passing open competitions, no attempts have been made to develop links with such bodies, for example by seeking to arrange traineeships or other forms of temporary employment or secondment.

Although employers have on occasion approached the course authorities directly with requests to recommend suitable candidates for employment, such a procedure is the exception rather than the rule. More commonly, advance notice is given of vacancies so that all the suitably qualified students on the course can be advised in good time and circulated with details of the post. In this way, it

may well be possible for an employer who has previously recruited from the course to do so again, without the need to advertise the vacancy.

5.5.8 Statistics

The returns to the DES covering DES-funded finishers from the 1986-87 course show that 11 out of 12 students found employment in their subject area, with the twelfth undertaking further study. As indicated in the preceding section, the course authorities take some pains to monitor students' subsequent careers and periodically send out questionnaires designed to update their files.

By way of illustration, there is currently a record of the occupations of 19 of the 20 students from the 1983-84 course. Of these, 13 are employed in the translation field, four are working in posts for which a knowledge of foreign languages is required and two have jobs which do not involve the use of languages. Seven of the 13 translators are working overseas (four in West Germany and one each in Switzerland, Austria and the Netherlands) and the other six in the United Kingdom. All the non-translators are based in the UK.

Apart from one of the UK-based translators who is working as a freelance, all the translators have staff posts. Of those in the UK, three work for government agencies or departments, one for a German computer company and one for a research organization. Three of the translators based in West Germany are employed by private-

sector companies and the fourth by the United States armed forces. The Swiss-based translator works for a firm of patent lawyers, the Austrian-based one for a United States government agency and the Dutch-based one for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in The Hague.

While the number of students taking the course in 1983-84 was higher than average, data from other years suggest that the breakdown of job destinations may be assumed to be reasonably typical.

5.6 Comparisons and contrasts

When the training opportunities available for would-be professional linguists are discussed, either by the authors of literature on careers or in conversation among those working in the field, the specialist courses described in the preceding sections tend to be grouped together, often with those dealt with in Chapter Four, as if all had the same purpose and were organized on more or less the same lines. As has been demonstrated above, there are indeed certain broad similarities between the courses, but in a considerable number of respects they differ quite significantly.

Most obviously, while all the courses seek to prepare students for careers as professional linguists, one focuses exclusively on interpreting, two on translation and two cover both disciplines. The interpreting course at PCL is organized on an entirely different basis from the others, being open to students with mother tongues other than English and taught almost entirely by practising interpreters from outside the polytechnic. Given minimal administrative support and the necessary technical facilities, it could be run anywhere in London. It is the only one of the courses which is able to adjust its intake to the perceived requirements of the market, but in doing so runs the risk of sacrificing quality for the sake of possible short-term advantages.

The four other courses split into two pairs: PCL and Kent for translation, and Bath and Bradford for translation with interpreting. There are perhaps rather more similarities between

the former pair than the latter, both being oriented towards the same commercial sector and both providing for the acquisition of new languages for the purposes of translation. Like its sister course in interpreting, the PCL translation programme is able to offer a wide range of languages by employing substantial numbers of external staff. Kent, on the other hand, caters for the single honours graduate who would not even be eligible for tests elsewhere. Although superficially similar and making use of much the same pool of outside expertise, the courses at Bath and Bradford are very different in style and substance. At Bradford, there is less flexibility regarding languages offered but no self-imposed restriction on the areas in which students should be encouraged to find employment. The course at Bath is specifically designed to prepare students for careers in international organizations, to the exclusion of other sectors.

The methods used to select students for admission vary to a remarkable degree. It is surprising that only Bradford has devised a special form for requesting references on applicants, given the vocational nature of the courses. On the translation side, Bradford and PCL both send out texts for applicants to translate at home, but whereas at Bradford this forms part of a battery of other tests, the only follow-up at PCL is an interview with the Course Leader, after which a decision is taken on whether to admit the candidate. These home translations would seem an excellent means of assessing applicants' suitability for training as a professional translator, more so than the test subsequently used by Bradford which involves

translating highly complex passages without dictionaries in a race against the clock.

This exercise illustrates a general tendency in the selection procedures to rely on testing candidates' knowledge of source languages rather than their aptitude for converting written or spoken material into their mother tongue, let alone their use of the mother tongue itself. Perhaps the most extreme example of this syndrome is the use of written translation exercises at PCL to test the linguistic knowledge of applicants for the interpreting course. This was not the only unexpected feature of interpreter testing at PCL, however. Booth tests not unnaturally form an important part of the selection process, but one would expect applicants to be given a reasonable chance to accustom themselves to an unfamiliar task and display any aptitude they may possess (particularly if they have paid £50 to be examined). During the tests witnessed by the author, however, the interruptions by the Course Leader and other assessors were so frequent and unhelpful that candidates were effectively prevented from delivering a coherent performance of any kind. The impression was given that the assessors had decided in advance that the candidates in question were unsuitable for the course and that they wished to conclude the exercise as rapidly as possible.

It is unfortunate that the tests originally developed at PCL to provide an indication of candidates' suitability for the interpreting profession seem now to have been largely relegated to the role of confirming the Course Leader's intuitive choice of candidates. Aptitude for interpreting or translation is a difficult

quality to assess, and any objective means of doing so should surely be exploited to the full. Otherwise, booth tests and, to a lesser extent, written translation exercises will tend to be used to determine candidates' aptitude when in fact they are better indicators of an acquired ability to interpret or translate. In practical terms, applicants with some experience of the techniques involved, perhaps gained from a final-year option during their undergraduate course, are likely to enjoy an advantage over those to whom the tasks are unfamiliar. To draw an analogy favoured by the interpreting profession in other respects, one would not expect the suitability of an applicant to study medicine to be assessed by placing him in an operating theatre and inviting him to carry out surgery.

Only at Kent and Bradford are there any exercises specifically intended to test applicants' ability to use English, and only in the tests for the interpreting course at PCL is there an assessment of applicants' general knowledge. Of these exercises, the editing test recently introduced at Bradford is perhaps the most helpful, since it allows candidates to demonstrate their ability to construct a coherent text. The use of English test employed at Kent in which candidates are asked to complete a series of clichés and hackneyed phrases could perhaps be modified so as to require them to offer alternatives to such usages. Similarly, it might be possible to devise a better test of current affairs or general knowledge than one which asks candidates to name obscure capital cities or the seats of large numbers of international organizations.

Differences are also apparent in the content and structure of the training programmes. At Bradford and Kent, classes in translation theory are regarded as an important element of the courses and lead to papers in the final examinations. At Bath and PCL, on the other hand, translation theory is seen as a separate discipline, somewhat remote from the practical work of the professional translator. All the courses involving translation provide for students to be introduced to work in certain specialized fields and to the techniques of approaching unfamiliar areas of terminology. Under the system of options at Bradford, however, students can decide not to take these classes in one or both languages, but concentrate instead on their interpreting. This points to a fundamental difference between the two mixed courses: at Bradford, the emphasis may be shifted towards one discipline or the other, with students able to drop simultaneous interpreting and take specialized translation or vice versa; at Bath, all students follow the same programme throughout the course and are examined in all its elements. There are other differences as regards interpreting, with students at Bradford all working into their foreign languages as well as into English in the consecutive mode, something not done at Bath, and being alone in benefiting from the excellent opportunities for practice afforded by the scheme of simulated conferences. Less in-house expertise is available at Bath, with greater reliance being placed on visits from professional interpreters.

The course at Bradford is an intensively taught, highly structured programme which taxes the intellectual and linguistic abilities of its students to a considerable degree; visitors have

described the atmosphere prevailing there as one of tension, stress and pressure. In contrast, the atmosphere at Bath is calmer and relaxed, almost to the point of being casual, as reflected in the comments made by students in section 5.1.8 above. There is less formal teaching (half the number of hours of interpreting tuition provided for at Bradford), the onus being placed on the students themselves to practise outside classes. Some students evidently respond to this approach better than others; whatever the pedagogical arguments for or against the Bath method, students there are likely to spend a rather different kind of year from their counterparts at Bradford.

The interpreting tests held at the end of all three courses covering the discipline naturally enough require the students to demonstrate their ability to work in the consecutive and simultaneous modes. By the same token, one might expect the translation tests to simulate professional working conditions in an analogous way. It is therefore surprising that for some of the translation examinations at Kent and for all those at Bath, the use of dictionaries is not allowed. In this context, it might be pointed out that candidates are permitted to use dictionaries and other works of reference in the majority of open competitions held by international organizations.

The assessment procedure used for the interpreting course at PCL differs from those elsewhere in that all the examiners are external and a simple pass/fail criterion is applied. The main drawback of this system is that different examiners attend from year

to year, so that without a staff representative on the examining panel there is no element of continuity; the visitors are merely asked to judge whether students are competent to be employed as interpreters, in the light of the standards applied by their particular organization. Coupled with the fact that failure in any one element of the tests means that the diploma is withheld, this procedure results in a low pass rate in comparison with the other courses (55 to 60%). The authorities at PCL point to this as a demonstration of the seriousness of the course, drawing parallels with continental institutions such as ESIT which admit students in large numbers but award their diplomas only to an élite few. Given that the PCL course is offered at postgraduate level, however, and is intended as a concentrated programme of specialized vocational training, the high failure rate seems more indicative of some other characteristic: possibly an inadequate procedure for selecting students, shortcomings in the instruction or practice facilities provided or simply an excessively severe system of examinations. On this last point, it is interesting to compare the more cautious attitude taken at Bradford towards external examiners, as described at the end^{of} section 5.2.6 above. Whatever the reason, however, a course which regularly leads to 40 to 45% of its intake failing to pass the final examination, and indeed expects this to occur, might well be more accurately described as wasting the time of a considerable proportion of those concerned.

To a greater or lesser extent, all the courses try to cultivate relations with employers. This is a more difficult task for the authorities at Bath, seeking to channel their students into

employment with international organizations which are for the most part unable to recruit directly from training courses. However, Bath and Bradford have pursued the effective strategy of placing all their students temporarily with employers and in some cases arranging traineeships for them once the course has ended. This not only gives students valuable experience of professional work, but can provide a route into longer-term employment in an international organization which other aspiring translators or interpreters would have difficulty in following. In the commercial sector, the translation courses at PCL and, to a lesser degree, Kent have developed links with employers which enable them to place substantial numbers of students directly into jobs. The interpreting course at PCL does least to facilitate the transition into employment, its only contribution being to provide a certain amount of contact with potential recruiters of interpreters, such as the external examiners.

In the light of the above, it can be concluded that the courses described in this chapter, though falling into the same broad category and overlapping in a number of areas, are different enough to provide the would-be professional linguist with a choice between training programmes which differ in style and content and which are designed to lead to employment in a variety of sectors. The tendency of careers advisers, academics and even practising linguists to treat the courses as a homogeneous group, without regard for these differences, highlights the need for more detailed and objective information to be made available, either by the courses themselves or by other bodies, to guide those contemplating

a career in interpreting or translation towards the most appropriate choice of vocational training.

CHAPTER SIX

SURVEYS OF PROFESSIONAL LINGUISTS IN EMPLOYMENT

This chapter sets out the results obtained from surveys of the members of the ITI and of staff translators at the European Parliament and the EC Commission. Details of the thinking behind these surveys and of the way in which they were conducted are contained in Chapter Two. The conclusions drawn from them will be found in Chapter Eight.

* * *

6.1 Members of the ITI

6.1.1 Level of response

Questionnaires were sent out to the 1,367 recipients of the ITI Bulletin published in December 1989. Allowing for the 42 corporate members, 92 subscribers and 99 student members to whom the survey did not apply, the target group effectively consisted of 1,134 fellows, members and associate members. It is worth drawing attention here to certain aspects of the ITI's membership requirements: fellows must have at least ten years' full-time professional experience; translator and interpreter members must be at least 25 years old and have a minimum of five years' or 200 days'

experience respectively; for associates, the periods are one year and 100 days, with a five-year limit applying to associate status.

A total of 197 questionnaires were returned, representing just over 17% of the target group. In order not to distort the findings, however, particularly those concerning training and entry to the professions, it was decided not to take account of the replies from respondents whose mother tongue was not English; apart from the fact that these linguists had for the most part been trained outside the United Kingdom, they were deemed not to be participating in the relevant sector of the employment market. There were 53 such responses, covering 12 foreign languages. On the other hand, five questionnaires completed by bilingual respondents with English as one of their languages of habitual use were treated as acceptable. The final response rate therefore lies at just below 13%.

On the basis of the answers given to Question 1, the respondents were divided into three categories: interpreters, translator-interpreters and translators. Before dealing with the questionnaires regarded as valid, it is interesting to note the breakdown of the 53 discounted responses, one of which came from an interpreter, 27 from translator-interpreters and 25 from translators. The relatively high number of foreign-language speakers active in interpreting (14% of all respondents) is suggestive of a greater demand for interpreting out of English within the United Kingdom than might have been expected. It is hardly surprising to find linguists from overseas active in the

United Kingdom market, however, given that the procedure is well known to operate in reverse.

It was anticipated that there would be few respondents who earned their living solely from interpreting, and this indeed proved to be the case, with only three of the 144 English native speakers who returned questionnaires falling into this category. Nevertheless, a total of 25% of these respondents can be described as active in interpreting, since 33 others were classified as translator-interpreters. This unexpectedly high figure was taken to provide a satisfactory basis for analysing the translator-interpreter category separately. The remaining 108 questionnaires were received from translators. The breakdown of replies received is shown in Tables 1 to 3 below:

Table 1 Overall breakdown of questionnaires returned:

Interpreters	4
Translator-interpreters	60
Translators	133
Total	197

Table 2 Questionnaires returned by foreign native speakers:

Interpreters	1
Translator-interpreters	27
Translators	25
Total	53

Table 3 Questionnaires returned by English native speakers:

Interpreters	3
Translator-interpreters	33
Translators	108
Total	144

The following sections deal in turn with the topics covered by the questionnaire, with reference first to each of the three categories defined above and then to the sample as a whole. Except where very small numbers of individuals are concerned, percentages are used throughout, rounded up or down to the nearest whole number. From this point on, references to the total number of respondents apply to the sample of 144 English native speakers, unless otherwise indicated.

6.1.2 Profiles

Questions 1 to 5 sought to establish a general profile of each respondent. Besides supplying information on their type of work (Question 1) and mother tongue (Question 4), respondents were asked to describe the capacity in which they were employed and to place themselves in one of five age brackets.

Of the three interpreters, two worked solely as freelances while the third was a staff linguist in the private sector who also operated as a freelance. One of the freelances was aged between 46

and 55; the other two interpreters fell into the 36 to 45 age bracket.

Among the translator-interpreters, 18% were employed as staff linguists, with 83% of these working in the private sector and the remainder in international bodies. None was employed in government service.

The remaining 82% of the translator-interpreters were thus engaged in freelance work. Of these, 70% worked independently, 30% also for an agency and none at all for agencies alone. There was some degree of overlap between the staff and freelance sectors, with 40% of the staff linguists in the private sector also performing freelance work.

None of the translator-interpreters was aged 25 or under. The bulk of linguists in this category (67%) were aged between 26 and 45, as shown by Table 4 below.

Table 4 Translator-interpreters by age:

	%
25 or under	0
26 to 35	30
36 to 45	37
46 to 55	18
over 55	15

As might have been expected, the breakdown of translators showed a somewhat larger proportion of full-time staff at 31%. Of these, 70% worked for private sector employers, 12% in government service and 18% in international bodies.

Among the 69% of translators operating as freelances, 80% worked independently, 13% also for an agency and 7% for agencies alone. The overlap between the staff and freelance sectors was smaller than in the case of the translator-interpreters, with only 6% of full-time translators also doing freelance work (3% each from the private sector and government service).

The breakdown by age is broadly similar to that for the translator-interpreters, although the proportions accounted for by the two highest age brackets are reversed.

Table 5 Translators by age:

	%
25 or under	3
26 to 35	30
36 to 45	32
46 to 55	16
over 55	19

In overall terms, 28% of the total sample were employed as full-time staff and 72% worked as freelances. The breakdowns by employment sector within each group and by age for the sample as a whole are given in Tables 6 to 8 below.

Table 6 Full-time staff by employer:

	%
Private sector	72
Government service	10
International bodies	18

In addition, 13% of all full-time staff also worked as freelances.

Table 7 Freelances by employment sector:

	%
Independent	78
Also for agency	17
For agencies alone	5

Table 8 Total sample by age:

	%
25 or under	2
26 to 35	29
36 to 45	34
46 to 55	17
over 55	18

6.1.3 Training for the professions

Questions 6 and 7 were designed to elicit information on respondents' training for their professions. Question 6 referred to the subject of their first degree and also asked whether this had

included any element of vocational training in interpreting or translation, while Question 7 covered details of any specialist courses taken in either discipline.

All three interpreters held first degrees in modern languages. In two cases, these had included training in both translation and interpreting, in the third only in translation. In this last case alone had the individual concerned taken a specialist course in interpreting, the one offered by the EC Commission in Brussels, which was considered time well spent.

Of the translator-interpreters, 82% were holders of a first degree. The breakdown by degree subject is shown in Table 9 below. The first category covers single-language degrees and those where a single language was combined with one or more other subjects. The second relates to degrees in two languages, including the questionnaire response 'modern languages' and other combinations in which more than one language had been studied. The third category covers degrees not involving language study.

Table 9 Graduate translator-interpreters by degree subject:

	%
One foreign language	22
More than one language	52
Other subjects	26

The subjects in the final category were English, business studies, physics, agriculture and natural sciences.

Table 10 shows the proportions of translator-interpreters with degrees involving some element of training in translation and/or interpreting.

Table 10 Translator-interpreters by training to first degree level:

	%
Element of translation	18
Element of interpreting	0
Elements of both	12
Degree alone	52
No degree	18

Specialist courses had been taken by 15% of the translator-interpreters, representing five individuals. Two had taken the interpreting course at PCL, two others an interpreting course at ESIT in Paris and one the translation course at the University of Kent. All considered the courses to have been time well spent.

First degrees were held by 90% of the translators. The breakdown by degree subject is shown in Table 11 below.

Table 11 Graduate translators by degree subject:

	%
One foreign language	22
More than one language	58
Other subjects	20

The extremely varied list of subjects covered by the third of these categories is as follows: English, law, natural sciences, chemical engineering, physics, mathematics, geology, biology, pharmacy, classics, business administration, chemistry, architecture, mining engineering, sociology and geography.

Table 12 shows the proportions of translators with degrees involving some element of training in translation and/or interpreting.

Table 12 Translators by training to first degree level:

	%
Element of translation	9
Element of interpreting	1
Elements of both	10
Degree alone	70
No degree	10

Specialist courses had been taken by 27% of the translators. While these did not include any courses solely in interpreting, it should be borne in mind that the programmes offered by the Universities of Bath and Bradford combine interpreting and translation and that students must pass examinations in both disciplines. Table 13 on the following page provides a breakdown of the specialist courses attended by the translators. The courses were considered time well spent by all those who had taken them, with the exception of one former student at PCL.

Table 13 Specialist courses attended by translators:

	%
PCL (Translation)	62
Bradford	14
Bath	7
Kent	7
Surrey	7
ESIT	3

In overall terms, therefore, 88% of the total sample held first degrees, with the breakdown by subject given below.

Table 14 Graduates by degree subject:

	%
One foreign language	21
More than one language	58
Other subjects	21

During the analysis of questionnaires, it became apparent that the qualifications of respondents aged over 55 followed a different pattern from those of linguists in the other age brackets. Further examination produced the following table.

Table 15 Graduates over 55 by degree subject:

	%
One foreign language	9
More than one language	32
Other subjects	59

While the proportion of graduates among the over-55s (85%) is similar to that for the sample as a whole (88%), it is interesting to note the high number of older translators who have moved into the profession after qualifying and, presumably, working in other fields. It will be recalled that this age group accounted for 18% of the total sample.

Table 16 shows the proportions of the total sample whose degrees contained some element of vocational training.

Table 16 Total sample by training to first degree level:

	%
Element of translation	12
Element of interpreting	1
Elements of both	12
Degree alone	63
No degree	12

Details of which specialist courses had been taken and the attitudes expressed towards them have been fully given above. It only remains to indicate that 24% of the total sample had followed courses of this kind.

6.1.4 Other training questions

This section deals with the responses to Questions 8 to 11 concerning other qualifications held, views on the training

opportunities available in the United Kingdom for would-be translators and interpreters, and the desirability of post-experience training.

On Question 8, the three interpreters each fell into a different category: one was a qualified teacher with experience of teaching; another had taught, but did not hold a qualification; the third had neither qualification nor experience. None possessed any additional qualifications, though it should be pointed out that only degrees and diplomas have been taken into account in assessing the answers to Question 9; since all the respondents held some grade of membership of the ITI, there seemed little point in collecting data on those who also belonged to other professional bodies such as the Institute of Linguists and AIIC.

As indicated in the instructions for the questionnaire, views on training opportunities available were taken to be negative unless a positive response was made. The only such responses given were by one interpreter who considered the opportunities sufficient and another who regarded them as useful. All three interpreters were interested in post-experience training.

Of the translator-interpreters, 18% had teaching qualifications and experience, and a further 42% experience alone. Only three individuals held any other qualifications, two in applied linguistics and one in civil engineering.

A number of respondents stated that they felt unable to comment on the training opportunities available because they were not sufficiently familiar with the current situation. Table 17 below takes this reaction into account.

Table 17 Translator-interpreters' views on training opportunities:

	%
Sufficient	3
Useful	27
Geared to market	3
Don't know	30

On Question 11, 70% of the translator-interpreters expressed an interest in post-experience training.

Turning to the translators, 14% had teaching qualifications and experience, and 25% experience alone. A further 4% were qualified, but had no experience. Thirteen individuals, representing 12% of the translator group, held additional qualifications. Six of these were doctorates in science subjects; four were masters' degrees in business administration and unspecified areas of the arts; one was a bachelor's degree in social sciences; the remaining two were diplomas in social administration and librarianship.

The views expressed by the translators on training opportunities available are summarized in Table 18. Once again, a

significant number of respondents declared themselves unable to give an opinion on the matter.

Table 18 Translators' views on training opportunities:

	%
Sufficient	10
Useful	38
Geared to market	13
Don't know	23

Among the translator group, 58% of respondents expressed an interest in post-experience training.

For the sample as a whole, the data concerning teaching qualifications and experience are given in Table 19 below.

Table 19 Teaching qualifications and experience of total sample:

	%
Qualification alone	3
Experience alone	29
Both	15

Other qualifications were held by 11% of the total sample; details of these have been given above for each group.

Table 20 on the following page shows the views expressed on training opportunities by the sample as a whole.

Table 20 Views of total sample on training opportunities:

	%
Sufficient	13
Useful	43
Geared to market	10
Don't know	24

Taking the sample as a whole, 62% of respondents declared themselves interested in post-experience training.

6.1.5 Entry to the professions

In Question 12, respondents were asked to state how they first entered their profession. The answers given were sometimes at odds with the data on current occupation, since a number of individuals had become freelances after working initially in full-time posts and vice versa.

The three interpreters had each followed a different route into the profession, one having applied for an advertised vacancy, another having established himself independently and the third having benefited from the contract linked to the interpreting course run by the EC Commission.

The following tables show the data obtained from the translator-interpreter and translator groups in turn.

Table 21 Routes into the professions - Translator-interpreters:

	%
Independently established	70
Advertised vacancy	21
Link via training	0
Personal contact	9

Table 22 Routes into the professions - Translators:

	%
Independently established	35
Advertised vacancy	50
Link via training	7
Personal contact	8

It should be pointed out that two translators classified as having entered the profession through an advertised vacancy had in fact moved sideways into their linguist posts from different sectors of the organizations which employed them. Nevertheless, they did originally join their employers by the means in question and are thus included in Table 22 on that basis.

Eight individuals are represented by the figure of 7% of translators initially finding employment through links with a training institution. In four of these cases, the institution concerned was PCL, and in three others Baling CHE, ESIT and the University of Bath. It was not possible to establish where the eighth respondent in this category had been trained.

Table 23 presents the data on entry into the professions in terms of the sample as a whole.

Table 23 Routes into the professions - Total sample:

	%
Independently established	43
Advertised vacancy	43
Link via training	6
Personal contact	8

6.1.6 Comments from respondents

The comments made by respondents in connection with the questionnaire centred on two areas - initial training, especially the acquisition of knowledge of specialized fields, and post-experience training for those already working in the professions. The first of these issues was summarized by one respondent in the following terms: 'On the whole, translators are born not made; all those born to it always need further training, generally non-linguistic, throughout their working lives, although regrettably training in too restricted a field will probably prove irrelevant in the long run. A basic knowledge of law, accountancy and finance, government administration and science and technology is essential to any serious translator in the commercial world - but attainable?'

These remarks raise a number of questions concerning the design of training courses. To what extent can translators be

'made'? What degree of specialized knowledge is it desirable for them to acquire? How can a basic familiarity with areas of general relevance best be inculcated into aspiring professional linguists? On the first of these points, another respondent commented as follows: 'I do not consider that translators can be manufactured by universities as if they were sausages. You cannot teach someone to be sensitive to linguistic subtleties or provide them with the cultural background of which a language is the reflection, in relation to a foreign language, if (a) they are not interested in cultural pursuits within their own language environment; (b) they are insensitive to the subtleties of their mother tongue; (c) they do not have an innate sense of style. It's a bit like trying to set up degrees for poets, authors, inventors and so on.' While it is hard to disagree with these statements, it must be pointed out that training courses are not intended to turn anyone and everyone into a professional linguist. On the contrary, their organizers go to considerable lengths to identify those applicants who possess exactly the kind of qualities described above. The aim must therefore be for courses to select 'born' translators and interpreters efficiently and 'make' them into competent members of the professions.

Opinions differed among respondents on how best to provide would-be professional linguists with knowledge of specialized fields. There was no dispute that such knowledge was essential: 'Far greater emphasis should be placed upon the acquisition of subject skills (e.g. engineering, banking, insurance, etc.), as too many translators hold themselves up as "experts" in fields in which

they have no practical knowledge', commented one respondent. Views on how to obtain these skills fell into two main categories. On the one hand were those who saw qualifications and/or experience in specialized fields as indispensable for the translator: 'I belong to the school that believes, certainly as far as technical or applied translation is concerned, that you should first qualify, and practise for several years, as a doctor or architect or pharmacologist or chartered engineer or nuclear physicist or patent attorney or whatever before going into translation. I feel that you need to know your subject very thoroughly before you can translate it. I am very sceptical about the type of courses, such as the University of Surrey runs, containing 30 hours of lectures in electrical engineering, 30 hours of mechanical engineering and so on, for young students who have had, and who will have, no other contact with these disciplines, and who then claim to be able to translate such material competently'.

While no respondents took the directly opposite view that a good translator would be capable, given sufficient time and access to facilities for research, of dealing with all but the most abstruse of technical material, several suggested that it was feasible for courses at various levels to offer a greater number of combinations of languages and technical subjects: 'either a main subject (e.g. law, marketing, aerospace) with subsidiary language or a language with an area of special interest (e.g. chemistry, pharmaceuticals, marine, automotive) learnt in that language', as one respondent put it. Neither attitude can be taken as exclusively valid: as the survey shows, there is room in the professions both

for entrants who have qualified in other fields and for those who have decided at the outset to make their careers as professional linguists.

The problem for the organizers of courses in interpreting and/or translation is how best to approach these specialized fields: if attention is focused on one particular area in which there may be expertise available, they are likely to be criticized for concentrating on potentially irrelevant topics. The scepticism expressed by the respondent quoted above regarding courses of the type run by the University of Surrey would be justified if lectures were the only form of instruction they provided. The aim, however, is surely to teach students how to familiarize themselves with a new subject area and cope with the difficulties presented by relevant foreign language material, not to supply them with a crash course in some aspect of technology. If, on the other hand, courses attempt to deal with too wide a variety of specialist fields, they are open to more justifiable charges of superficiality. The solution chosen will depend in each case on the resources available and on the precise aims of each course; whatever approach is adopted to providing training in specialized fields, however, any serious curriculum would have to include some means of developing students' awareness of areas of general interest likely to be encountered on frequent occasions in the course of professional work.

The second topic covered by the questionnaire which attracted a large number of comments was post-experience training, itself a potential means of acquiring a broader knowledge of specialized

fields. There was general agreement on the desirability of such training, and various suggestions were made regarding the form it might take. Some respondents saw a need for home-study units on specialist topics, based on reading lists selected by experts from the literature available, while others preferred a 'workshop' format with contributions from staff translators in a particular sector. It was pointed out that many linguists could not afford to take time off to attend for longer periods of training. The majority, however, agreed with the respondent who commented as follows: 'More emphasis should be given to the short-course approach, through which polytechnics or other centres of education can provide better access to specialized areas of knowledge either in linguistic or subject-related fields: for example, the PCL short courses in German law; or weekend workshops in specific disciplines; or translator-oriented language 'refresher' courses'.

Other points of interest included training in the practical side of language work, and the careers advice given to students expressing a wish to become professional linguists. Commenting on his replies to Question 10 concerning the training opportunities available, one respondent stated: 'I do not think they are sufficiently geared to the practicalities of translation work, or to work in the context of self-employment (the need to organize one's work, to be able to handle office equipment) also, translation is a practical skill in which theory can only be of secondary relevance'.

Several respondents had views to express on careers guidance in the context of their replies to Question 12 concerning entry to the professions. Two examples of these comments, which were uniformly negative, are worth reproducing here. One translator was perhaps a little over-pessimistic: 'As an A-level student about to leave school, I was told that the only job I could go into with languages would be teaching. I have no reason to believe that things have improved since that time (17 years ago!)'. Another had a more positive outlook: 'I only discovered at the age of 30 that my childhood ambition to be a translator was within my abilities. I was transferred sideways from a secretarial post to one as a staff translator. Thank goodness British universities do now run translation courses. Perhaps careers officers also no longer recommend aspiring translators to try librarianship instead.'

6.2 Staff translators at the European Parliament and the EC Commission

6.2.1 Assumptions regarding Community staff

As indicated in Chapter Two, this survey of 54 English-language staff translators employed at the European Parliament and the EC Commission in Luxembourg was conducted using a shortened version of the questionnaire sent out to members of the ITI. A number of the questions included in the ITI survey were obviously redundant, for example those concerning nature of employment and mother tongue. It was also felt, however, that because all the

subjects had, by definition, passed European Community open competitions for which strict conditions of admissibility would have been applied, the pattern of answers to some of the remaining questions was very likely to be distorted. The points concerned were as follows: age, because there is an age-limit of between 35 and 40 for competitions and no English-language staff would have been recruited before the accession of the United Kingdom in 1973; degree subject, since although it is not obligatory to hold a degree in modern languages, linguistic knowledge is the main criterion used for recruitment purposes; other qualifications, again because it was expected that the translators would be specialist linguists; views on training opportunities, as Community staff work overseas and are thus more likely to have lost touch with the situation in the United Kingdom; entry to the professions, since all the sample are working for an employer who recruits by open competition.

In order to avoid putting unnecessary questions, but at the same time to check the validity of the assumptions described above, it was decided to split the sample into two groups: 20 translators at the European Parliament and 34 at the Commission. The Parliament translators were given copies of a questionnaire which still contained the items thought likely to be unreliable indicators, while those at the Commission were interviewed face to face on the relatively few remaining points. Details are given below of the responses obtained on the items submitted only to the Parliament group.

On age, the breakdown was very much as expected, with 80% of the translators concentrated in the range from 26 to 45.

Table 24 Parliament translators by age:

	%
25 or under	0
26 to 35	35
36 to 45	45
46 to 55	15
over 55	5

Expectations regarding degree subject and other qualifications were similarly fulfilled. Nineteen of the 20 translators possessed degrees in modern languages, with the one exception holding a degree in history. Three translators also held masters' degrees, two in applied linguistics and one in Soviet studies.

The Community translators' views on training opportunities in the United Kingdom, on the other hand, are much less easy to discount. Table 25 below shows the responses that were collected.

Table 25 Parliament translators' views on training opportunities:

	%
Sufficient	5
Useful	30
Geared to market	20
Don't know	30

These results are not particularly dissimilar to those obtained from the ITI sample and presented in Tables 17, 18 and 20 above. It may well be, therefore, that the views of Community translators on this matter could have been more widely canvassed. As with the ITI sample, however, the relatively high proportion of don't knows suggests that some degree of caution may be necessary in assessing these data.

A clearer picture emerges regarding the translators' routes into the profession.

Table 26 Routes into the profession - Parliament translators:

	%
Independently established	10
Advertised vacancy	75
Link via training	10
Personal contact	5

The two individuals who entered the profession through a link with a training institution had both attended the postgraduate translation course at PCL.

6.2.2 Background and training

Of the total sample of 54 Community translators, 11% (six individuals) had taken first degree courses involving an element of training in both interpreting and translation. None had followed a

course involving only one of the disciplines. It was possible to identify the training institutions concerned: three translators had attended the University of Salford, two had graduated from Heriot-Watt University and one from the University of Bradford.

In addition, 24% of the total sample (13 individuals) had taken specialist courses in translation or translation and interpreting. The breakdown of attendance was as follows:

Table 27 Specialist courses taken by Community translator sample:

University of Bath	4
University of Bradford	4
PCL (Translation)	3
University of Kent	2

All those who had taken specialist courses considered the time well spent, with the exception of one translator who expressed a decidedly jaundiced view of the course at Bath: 'In my view the Bath postgraduate course was abysmal (i.e. I learnt nothing from it). However, it did give me an insight into the job market, and since most aspiring translators/interpreters know very little about their job prospects or how to get into international organizations, the course did give me an advantage over them. In short, the course creates "insiders" and "outsiders", not in terms of linguistic ability or professional competence but in terms of knowing how to knock on doors. Some people might say that is time well spent.'

Teaching formed part of the background of a substantial proportion of the translators, with 26% having a teaching qualification and experience. A further 22% had some experience of teaching, but no qualification in the field.

Exactly half the total sample expressed an interest in post-experience training, one of the Parliament translators commenting that the best form of training was experience itself.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SURVEYS OF EMPLOYERS

This chapter presents the results of two surveys. The first, of employers known to recruit United Kingdom graduates, was designed to provide a general view of the current situation on the employment market for professional linguists. The second dealt specifically with the recruitment practices of the EC Commission in relation to interpreters. Details of the methods used to conduct these surveys are contained in Chapter Two. The conclusions drawn from them will be found in Chapter Eight.

* * *

7.1 Employers of United Kingdom graduates

7.1.1 Target group and level of response

In drawing up the list of 100 employers to whom questionnaires would be addressed, the following procedure was applied. Firstly, known employers of translators and interpreters were automatically included. To these were added known recruiters of United Kingdom graduates in modern languages, with preference given to those whose business seemed likely to involve overseas contacts or other activities requiring linguists to be employed. No account was taken

of employers such as international organizations who recruit by special means.

Three sources of reference were used: the latest editions of the GO and CRAC guides to graduate employment (1989), both of which list employers of translators and interpreters, and the 1990 graduate recruitment programme of the University of Bath Careers Service, which describes the activities of some 140 organizations that recruit graduates on a regular basis and indicates the disciplines they are likely to require.

In this way, it was possible to compile a target group of 100 employers in a wide variety of sectors, including major UK-based and multinational companies, banks, nationalized industries and government agencies and departments. The full list is contained in Appendix IV. Replies were received from 63 members of the target group, 12 of which proved unusable because the respondents were either unwilling or unable to provide the information which had been sought. The final rate of response was therefore 51%, with the sample providing a satisfactory geographical spread.

The following sections deal in turn with those parts of the questionnaires concerning four different categories of employees: in-house and external translators and interpreters respectively. A final section then sets out the data collected in terms of the sample as a whole. As in the previous chapter, the results are expressed in percentages throughout, except where the numbers involved are particularly small.

7.1.2 In-house translation

The answers given to Question 1 showed that 78% of all respondents used translation services (see Table 43). A breakdown is given in Table 27 below of how these services were provided.

Table 27 Translation services by provider:

	%
In-house staff only	5
In-house and external	50
External only	45

In-house translation was therefore being provided for 43% of all respondents. The numbers of translation staff involved were 126 full-time and 12 part-time employees. However, the information supplied in answer to Question 3 revealed that a considerable amount of translation work was carried out by staff with other duties.

Table 28 Translation work carried out by in-house staff with other duties (by employer):

	%
None	46
Some	27
All	27

The types of employees carrying out translation work included technical writers, sales staff, personal assistants, commodity traders, clerical staff, editors, accountants, secretaries, and

staff in marketing and personnel: in short, anyone with a certain amount of linguistic competence. The 27% of employers for whom in-house translation was provided, but who in fact used only staff from other sectors to carry out translation work can therefore be discounted for the purposes of Questions 4 to 11, which for the most part they did not in any case complete.

As a result of this finding, the proportion of all respondents actually employing in-house translation staff is reduced to 31%.

Questions 4 to 6 concerned the recruitment of in-house translation staff. The following table shows the methods used.

Table 29 Methods of recruiting in-house translation staff

(by employer):

	%
Advertisement alone	31
Recommendation alone	0
Training links alone	6
Advertisement and recommendation	13
Advertisement and links	0
Recommendation and links	13
All three methods	37

In overall terms, therefore, 81% of recruiters used advertisements, 63% personal contact or recommendation and 56% links with training institutions.

Tables 30 and 31 below set out the responses given to Questions 5 and 6.

Table 30 Difficulty of recruiting in-house translation staff
(by employer):

	%
Harder than average	44
Average	37
Easier than average	19

Table 31 Standing of applicants from specialist courses in relation
to other applicants (by employer):

	%
Better off	69
Worse off	0
On equal footing	31

Taking both full-time and part-time employees into account, 50% of all in-house translation staff had followed a specialist course in translation. The desirability of training of this kind was mentioned by two respondents in their answers to Question 8 concerning the qualities looked for in applicants for translation posts. Otherwise, the qualities sought by employers fell into three broad categories, covering translation and intellectual skills, personal qualities and knowledge of specialized fields. The first of these categories was summarized by the following list compiled by one of the respondents: 'Quickness of mind, flexibility with an instinct for the written meaning, the ability to grasp the scope of

the subject-matter, the ability to make a translation read as if it were the original. Ability to express one's thoughts in a clear, precise manner'. Another answer provided a comprehensive list of personal qualities, a number of which were mentioned by other respondents: 'Real world awareness; motivation (desire to be a translator); ability to work under pressure; commitment (willingness to work hard); adaptability; pleasant personality (good working relations with colleagues)'. Other qualities referred to included good interpersonal skills, negotiating skills and commercial acumen.

Several respondents clearly gave preference to applicants with knowledge of a specialized field or who could at least show some ability to cope with technical material; the commercial, legal and medical areas were mentioned. Two indicated that they specifically sought translation staff with scientific or technical qualifications and experience, but had difficulty in finding suitable candidates. Lack of technical expertise or flair thus featured prominently among the responses to Question 9, alongside poor understanding of source texts and inadequate translation skills. Common failings in this last respect were over-literal translations and mistakes in the use of English. In terms of personality, respondents had encountered applicants lacking in motivation and common sense and others who would have difficulty fitting into a team. Lastly, one respondent criticized applicants who gave the impression that they wished to obtain posts as translators in order to be able to move elsewhere within the organization at a later stage. Such applicants would seem to have little awareness of the difficulties normally faced by linguists attempting subsequent career moves of this kind.

Questions 10 and 11 concerned links with training institutions and the involvement of employers in various aspects of translation courses. The responses showed that 50% of the employers of in-house translation staff already had links with training courses and that a further 31% considered that such links would be of use to them. The involvement of employers in the design of training courses was viewed favourably by 63% of the respondents, but there was less enthusiasm for participating in their implementation (25%) and funding (13%).

Finally, the employers' perceptions of the trend in the volume of in-house work are shown in the following table. It should be noted that all the users of in-house translation replied to this question, including those discounted for the purposes of Questions 4 to 11.

Table 32 Trend in the volume of in-house translation work
(by user):

	%
Increasing	50
Decreasing	4
No change	46

7.1.3 External translation

Table 27 at the beginning of the previous section showed that 95% of the respondents who used translation services allotted at

least some of their work to external providers. Exactly half used both in-house and external services, while 45% made use of external services alone. The following table shows the answers given to Question 13 concerning the frequency with which external services were used.

Table 33 Frequency of use of external translation services
(by user):

	%
Frequently	45
Occasionally	31
Rarely	24

In Question 14, respondents were first asked on what basis they employed their external translators. The results obtained were as follows:

Table 34 Employment basis of external translators (by user):

	%
Using agencies	42
Using LX centres	5
Employing freelances directly	37
Using agencies and freelances	16

In overall terms, therefore, 58% of those using external translation services gave work to agencies and 53% employed freelances directly.

The second part of Question 14 sought information on the methods used to find freelance translators. The answers given are set out in Table 35 below.

Table 35 Methods of finding freelance translators (by user):

	%
Advertisement alone	0
Recommendation alone	55
Training links alone	0
Advertisement and recommendation	20
Advertisement and links	0
Recommendation and links	15
All three methods	10

All those who employed freelancers thus made some use of personal contacts or recommendations, with 30% also using advertisements and 25% links with training institutions.

The final question concerned the short-term trend in the volume of translation work, as seen by the users of external services. Table 36 presents the information that was obtained.

Table 36 Trend in the volume of freelance translation work

(by user):

	%
Increasing	29
Decreasing	8
No change	63

7.1.4 In-house interpreting

As might have been expected, this proved to be the smallest of the four categories under discussion. While the answers given to Question 1 showed that 41% of all respondents used interpreting services (see Table 43), in only one case did an employer not make some use of external staff. A breakdown is given in Table 37 below of how interpreting services were provided.

Table 37 Interpreting services by provider:

	%
In-house staff only	5
In-house and external	33
External only	62

In-house interpreting was therefore being provided for 16% of all respondents. The numbers of staff involved were nine full-time employees and one part-timer. It was clear from the answers given to Questions 2 and 3, however, that these staff had been recruited as translator-interpreters; there were consequently no staff exclusively responsible for interpreting. Apart from the translators, the other types of employee used to provide interpreting were sales staff and personal assistants.

In these circumstances, very little information was obtained from Questions 4 to 11 of the interpreting questionnaire. The few answers that were given concerned the translator-interpreter

category referred to above and employed by six of the eight users of in-house interpreting. These responses are only mentioned here insofar as they differ from those given to the corresponding items in the translation questionnaire.

On Question 4, one respondent recruited by personal contact or recommendation and another through a link with a training institution. Three respondents indicated that applicants who had followed a specialist course in interpreting would have an advantage in terms of finding employment, and one had recruited such a person. Attributes regarded as desirable were specialist technical knowledge, presentability, a professional demeanour and an ability to make the parties feel at ease. Two respondents favoured the involvement of employers in the design of training courses.

A rather more valid response was produced by Question 12 concerning views on the short-term trend in the volume of in-house interpreting work, details of which are given in Table 38 below.

Table 38 Trend in the volume of in-house interpreting work
(by user):

	%
Increasing	75
Decreasing	0
No change	25

7.1.5 External interpreting

As shown in Table 37 at the beginning of the previous section, 95% of the respondents who used interpreting services turned to external providers for at least some of the work required. A majority of 62% used external services alone, while 33% combined them with the services of in-house staff. The following table shows the information obtained in answer to Question 13 concerning the frequency with which external services were used.

Table 39 Frequency of use of external interpreting services

(by user):

	%
Frequently	10
Occasionally	35
Rarely	55

In the first part of Question 14, respondents were asked to indicate the basis on which they employed their external interpreters. The results are given in Table 40.

Table 40 Employment basis of external interpreters (by user):

	%
Using agencies	30
Using LX centres	10
Employing freelances directly	30
Using agencies and freelances	30

It can thus be seen that 60% of those using external interpreting services gave work to agencies and that exactly the same proportion employed freelances directly.

The information obtained in response to the second part of Question 14, concerning the methods used to find freelance interpreters, is set out in Table 41 below.

Table 41 Methods of finding freelance interpreters (by user):

	%
Advertisement alone	0
Recommendation alone	67
Training links alone	0
Advertisement and recommendation	0
Advertisement and links	0
Recommendation and links	8
All three methods	0
No reply given	25

All those who replied to this question therefore made some use of personal contacts or recommendations.

Finally, Table 42 on the following page presents the views expressed regarding the short-term trend in the volume of external interpreting work.

Table 42 Trend in the volume of external interpreting work
(by user):

	%
Increasing	45
Decreasing	0
No change	55

7.1.6 Overall results

In this section, the data presented by category above are combined to provide results in terms of the sample as a whole. In view of the patchiness of some of the responses to the questionnaire on interpreting, however, it was felt that to mix these with the translation data would not enhance the quality of the findings. The five tables below thus present only the most meaningful overall results.

Table 43 Use of language services (total sample):

	%
Translation only	43
Interpreting only	6
Both	35
Neither	16

Table 44 Language services by provider (total sample):

	%
In-house staff only	5
In-house and external	44
External only	51

Table 45 Methods of recruiting/finding staff (total sample):

	%
Advertisement alone	11
Recommendation alone	42
Training links alone	4
Advertisement and recommendation	13
Advertisement and links	0
Recommendation and links	13
All three methods	17

In overall terms, therefore, 41% of recruiters used advertisements, 85% personal contact or recommendation and 34% links with training institutions.

Table 46 Employment basis of external language staff (all users):

	%
Using agencies	38
Using LX centres	7
Employing freelances directly	34
Using agencies and freelances	21

Table 47 Trend in the volume of language work (all users):

	%
Increasing	42
Decreasing	5
No change	53

7.2 Recruitment of interpreters by the EC Commission

The Commission of the European Communities is by some way the world's largest employer of interpreters. Its Joint Interpreting and Conference Service (JICS) is responsible for providing interpretation at meetings held by the Commission, the Council of Ministers, the Economic and Social Committee and the European Investment Bank. In 1988, a total of 9,137 such meetings took place, representing a workload of 106,395 interpreter days. By way of comparison, the volume of interpreting work carried out by the United Nations Organization in New York is approximately 15% of the Commission's total. These figures and other statistical information concerning the activities of the JICS were obtained from internal Commission documents, in particular SCIC 1-440/89 and SCIC 1-369/89/rev.. The data on performances in tests and competitions were drawn from a variety of Commission sources, including summaries contained in documents SCIC 1-001/86 and SCIC 1-2587/86.

In March 1989, the JICS had 442 full-time interpreter posts, 392 of which were filled, 61 by English native speakers. Of these,

however, only 273 were held by Community officials, the remaining 119 posts being occupied by temporary and auxiliary staff on contracts of varying duration. As explained in Chapter Three, the Commission is obliged to recruit its permanent staff by means of open competitions organized in accordance with certain regulations. Where a vacant post exists, however, it is able to engage a temporary employee who demonstrates the ability required. Two-year contracts are offered to interpreters who successfully complete the Commission's own six-month training programme, designed to provide a regular supply of competent interpreting staff. No less than 44% of the full-time posts were occupied by former Commission trainees. On the date in question, 28 would-be interpreters were following the Commission's course, none of them from the United Kingdom or with English as their mother tongue.

Around 38% of the Commission's interpreting work is carried out by freelances, over 1,400 of whom have been approved for employment, including 280 English native speakers. All applicants for freelance work or temporary contracts are required to take the same tests as the trainees who complete the Commission's interpreting course. In 1988, 663 candidates took the tests, with 298 succeeding, a pass rate of 45%.

According to the Commission, virtually all the applications to take these tests come from candidates who have obtained some kind of interpreting qualification from a higher education institution. It has in fact adopted a policy of discouraging others who express interest from taking the freelance tests, channelling them instead

towards the tests for admission to the six-month training programme. The quality represented by the various degrees and diplomas held by applicants is extremely variable, and the Commission has for some time monitored the performance of candidates from the various institutions offering qualifications in interpreting, both in the freelance tests and in open competitions. It would be fair to say that its views of the training institutions concerned have been very largely conditioned by these records of performance.

Universities and polytechnics in the United Kingdom have a certain advantage in these circumstances, since apart from the undergraduate course at Heriot-Watt University, all the training programmes available take place at postgraduate level and concentrate to a large extent on the discipline in question. Such is not the case with many of the programmes in other countries of Western Europe, which run over several years and include all kinds of other linguistic and cultural components. Surprisingly, however, some doubt was cast on the quality of the interpreting course at PCL, which was described as particularly uneven. This was attributed to its idiosyncratic admissions procedure, which was thought to allow too many underqualified applicants to gain entry to the course. The Commission's records of performance in competitions bear out this judgement to some extent, as perhaps does the failure rate of students on the PCL course itself.

As regards the freelance tests, 1,024 candidates were tested between 1975 and 1985. The overall failure rates are set out on in Table 48 on the following page.

Table 48 Failure rates in Commission freelance tests, 1975-85:

	%
Commission trainees	11
CIUTI graduates	35
Non-CIUTI graduates	61
All candidates	37

The failure rates for candidates from individual institutions varied widely. Among CIUTI members, for example, the lowest rate was that of the University of Bath at 5%, the highest that of the Handelshøjskole in Århus at 92% (it should be pointed out that the University of Bradford was not a member of CIUTI during the period in question).

The results achieved in open competitions, which represent a broader test of candidates' ability, are worth examining in slightly greater detail. Competitions were held at regular intervals in the same period, with a total of 433 candidates admitted to the tests. Table 49 shows the failure rates recorded.

Table 49 Failure rates in Commission competitions, 1975-85:

	%
Commission trainees	35
CIUTI graduates	32
Non-CIUTI graduates	45
All candidates	36

Individual United Kingdom institutions fared as follows:

	Candidates	Failures	Failure rate
Bath	7	3	43%
Bradford	2	2	100%
Heriot-Watt	1	1	100%
PCL	11	5	45%

The Commission saw the volume of interpreting work as likely to continue to increase. The only prospect of a significant reduction lay, paradoxically, in the accession to the Community of new Member States, since the present system would have difficulty in coping with the addition of another official language. As things stood at present, however, national sensibilities made it impossible to contemplate altering the status of the less widely spoken languages; the most that could be done was to review the arrangements for providing interpretation at certain types of meeting.

The situation regarding needs for specific language combinations was seen as fluid and difficult to predict a long way in advance. At the time of the survey, the Commission had a need for English native speakers able to interpret from German, Italian, Greek and Portuguese, but there was no telling how long this situation would apply.

It was emphasized that expertise in other fields was seen as a considerable advantage, and that it was by no means essential for

would-be interpreters to hold formal qualifications in modern languages. Degrees in subjects such as politics and economics were particularly useful, and a substantial number of the Commission's own trainees had held such qualifications. In some respects, this represented a more appropriate route into employment from the Commission's point of view, provided the applicants had the necessary linguistic ability. Ultimately, however, by far the most important factor was an aptitude for interpreting, and if the Commission took some training courses rather more seriously than others, it was because they had a better record in identifying individuals with potential.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter brings together, under five main headings, the findings which seem most likely to be of relevance in any initiative to improve the structure and operation of the present system of training professional linguists and enabling them to use their skills in employment. In each section, therefore, conclusions are drawn regarding the benefits that might be achieved for those wishing to make a career in interpreting or translation, for the organizers of specialist training courses and for the employers of professional linguists.

* * *

8.1 Careers guidance

Becoming a translator or interpreter is always described as difficult. It should not, however, be regarded as an ambition which is impossible to achieve. Sensible and helpful advice on how to set about determining whether one has the potential to succeed and, if so, on what strategy to adopt, can nevertheless only be given with a full knowledge both of the training opportunities available and of the possible routes into the professions. To judge by the careers literature currently being published, detailed knowledge of this

kind may not always be held by those responsible for disseminating advice, particularly in the context of the move from secondary to higher education.

The most obvious route into any profession is to follow an appropriate course of training. For careers in translation and interpreting, however, the path to take is not immediately clear, since there is only one first degree course genuinely specializing in the disciplines. The value of training in career terms is confirmed by a variety of statistics which demonstrate that the prospects of finding employment as a professional linguist are significantly enhanced by possession of a specialist qualification. In looking at these figures, it must be borne in mind that the number of students who obtain a qualification of this kind in interpreting and/or translation each year is not large, in terms of potential new entrants to an established profession. Allowing for the best graduates from the first degree course at Heriot-Watt University, there are likely to be only six to eight individuals who have been trained solely as interpreters, 40 who have specialized as translators and 25 who are qualified in both disciplines. All would be capable of working from at least two foreign languages into English. The percentages given below thus acquire added significance, since the pool of qualified linguists on which the professions can draw is evidently small.

Among these statistics, Table 16 in Chapter Six shows that 25% of the ITI members who participated in the survey had followed a first degree course which included some element of vocational

training in translation and/or interpreting. As regards the specialist postgraduate courses, the data supplied by the DES indicate that 85% of students qualifying in 1987 found employment in their subject area, while the surveys carried out for the purposes of this research show that 24% of both the ITI respondents and the sample of European Community staff had taken specialist courses. Perhaps most strikingly, the employer survey found that 50% of all the in-house translation staff concerned had undergone specialized training for their work. Evidence of the links which exist between courses and employers was also produced and will be discussed in sections 8.4 and 8.5 below.

One possible strategy for the would-be translator or interpreter about to embark on a course in higher education is therefore to set his sights in the medium term on a specialist course at postgraduate level, though the competition for places is intense. An interim move would be to take an undergraduate course with some element of vocational training, the opportunities for which were described in Chapter Four, either as a potential means of entering the translating or interpreting professions directly or to provide a foundation for further training.

An alternative route apparently neglected by careers advisers is to qualify in a field other than languages, while at the same time maintaining a sound level of linguistic competence, with a view to moving into translation or interpreting at a later stage. Several respondents in the employer survey expressed a wish to recruit this type of individual, and those responsible for

interpreter training and recruitment at the EC Commission also indicated that such candidates were by no means at a disadvantage. Table 14 in Chapter Six shows that 21% of the ITI respondents held degrees in subjects other than languages, suggesting that formal language qualifications are not an absolute prerequisite for the professional linguist. In passing, it is interesting to note that 47% of the ITI respondents and 48% of the sample of European Community staff had qualifications and/or experience in teaching. These figures suggest that for many the route into translation or interpreting has not simply been a transition from course to job, and that it has been necessary to spend some time in another area of language-related work.

Training overseas is an area deliberately excluded from the scope of this thesis, but it is an option that is likely to become increasingly feasible as student mobility is encouraged. On this, as on other matters in this field, more information needs to be supplied. If would-be translators and interpreters are to be satisfactorily guided both in their general career planning and in their choice of specific courses, those who advise them must be aware of the variety of approaches that are possible and, in particular, of the differences between the training opportunities available, as described in section 5.6 above.

8.2 Training at undergraduate level

The survey of undergraduate courses described in Chapter Four revealed that 23 higher education institutions in the United Kingdom offered courses which included an element of interpreting or specialized translation, as distinct from the conventional type of translation exercises. This figure represents 25% of those universities, polytechnics and colleges at which degree-level courses in at least one modern language are available. The essential distinction to make in this context is between those courses which use techniques such as revision exercises, interpreting and non-literary translation for the purpose of developing their students' language skills and those which set out to introduce students to professional activities. Only the degree course at Heriot-Watt University goes beyond the introductory stage.

There is surely little doubt that interpreting and a broad range of translation or revision exercises are an entirely valid component of undergraduate courses. They can serve to enhance the skills of aural comprehension and oral expression, the speed of linguistic reflexes, the breadth of students' vocabulary and their ability to deal with a variety of language registers. The research by Henderson (1984) discussed at the end of Chapter Three suggests that there is no reason for excluding such activities from first degree courses on the grounds that they are suitable only for certain types of personality. On the other hand, such exercises should not be mistaken for training in professional skills. While practice in liaison interpreting, for example, may develop students'

ability to perform that particular task in situations they may encounter in their subsequent careers, it does not provide an adequate basis for graduates to enter the interpreting profession, for which further training is normally required.

The usefulness of options or other course elements which introduce students to the techniques of conference interpreting and specialized translation, covering the type of material dealt with by professional linguists in their everyday work, lies not so much in the standard of performance it is possible to achieve, which is likely to be limited, as in the exposure they provide to the activities of the professions. Not only are students enabled to appreciate the nature of the work involved, but they also have an opportunity to assess their own aptitude, ability and liking for it. For this reason, it would be undesirable for students to be excluded from such options by tutors simply because they are thought not to be suitable candidates; those wishing to test the professional waters should be allowed to do so.

The school-leaver specifically interested in an undergraduate course providing some contact with the translating or interpreting professions, as opposed to a course simply of less conventional design incorporating a range of language-teaching methods, would thus be well advised to seek out a programme of the type described in the preceding paragraph. The difficulty at this point is in identifying courses of the appropriate kind. Applicants seem likely to be misled rather than assisted by the emphasis placed on interpreting, in particular, in publicity material and by references

to the numbers of graduates who have found careers as professional linguists which do not specify whether further training was involved. In other cases, courses hide their light under a bushel by not drawing attention to teaching expertise or facilities that may be available. Once again, an objective, detailed guide to opportunities in this area, regularly updated to take account of new developments, would be of considerable benefit.

8.3 Selection procedures for specialist courses

The high proportion of those qualifying from specialist courses in translation and/or interpreting who go on to find employment in the field implies that a form of pre-selection is in operation, whereby students who succeed in gaining places on a specialist course have their chances of employment as professional linguists significantly increased. In these circumstances, the methods used to select students for such courses assume considerable importance, especially in view of the fact that an appreciable number of employers recruit staff by means of links with training institutions: 34% of respondents in the employer survey described in Chapter Seven made some use of this form of recruitment.

Given that the courses in question have run in a generally satisfactory way for a number of years, the selection procedures originally devised have tended to become self-perpetuating and have thus not often been subject to review. In this context, it would be particularly interesting to examine the correlation between

students' test performance, coursework and subsequent job potential. In the light of the comments made by employers in the survey, some gaps might be detected in the profiles of candidates drawn up by the training institutions during their selection procedures.

The two main qualities sought but not found by employers were the ability to use English well and some degree of familiarity with technical fields. While an assessment of the former quality is naturally implicit in all the various batteries of tests, only at Kent and Bradford are there exercises specifically designed to test candidates' vocabulary and ability to manipulate their own language; in general terms, the emphasis is on comprehension of the source language in translation and summarizing tests. There would certainly appear to be room for more revision exercises on the lines of the editing test used at Bradford, perhaps combined with an essay written in English. An essay would have the further advantage of enabling candidates to demonstrate their general knowledge and awareness of current affairs more effectively than by answering specific questions put during an interview, which may itself be conducted in a foreign language. Exercises could also be devised to test for the quality described by respondents in the employer survey as 'technical flair'. While it would be unrealistic to expect applicants to possess detailed knowledge of a particular field, they could usefully be tested on basic technical terminology and principles; this applies particularly to the courses at Kent and PCL, which are oriented towards the commercial sector.

As discussed in section 5.6, several of the exercises used are so difficult that they seem to constitute tests of acquired ability rather than of aptitude, particularly as regards interpreting. Ideally, objective tests designed to measure candidates' intellectual suitability for work as a professional linguist should form a major part of the selection procedure, not necessarily involving the foreign-language element. These would focus, like those available but not fully exploited at PCL, on the ability to assimilate and re-express information, short-term memory and powers of concentration, and speed of intellectual response. The tests currently in use which seem best calculated to provide a measurement of these characteristics are the summarizing exercises at Bath and the on-sight translation exercise at Bradford, the latter calling for an amalgam of skills on the part of the candidate which is particularly relevant to a course covering both interpreting and translation.

Otherwise, aptitude tends to be measured by attempting to simulate the activities in which candidates are applying to be trained. The dangers here are twofold: firstly, the tests may be made too difficult, with the result that candidates are overwhelmed by the task confronting them and fail to do themselves justice - it should be remembered that applicants are already subject to a certain amount of stress because they are being examined, so that there is little point in deliberately putting them under further pressure by creating an artificial testing situation; secondly, over-reliance on intuition should be avoided, for example by basing decisions on whether to admit candidates on the deliberations of a

panel of assessors. Intuition based on professional experience obviously has a part to play in the selection process, but there is a risk that personal prejudices may intrude on more objective considerations.

Booth tests therefore need to be carefully devised to ensure that the right qualities are being assessed under appropriate conditions. It may be, however, that a booth test is not an essential element in the selection procedure, provided aptitude is satisfactorily measured in other ways. On the translation side, the use of home translation passages seems a good means of simulating professional activity, since the exercise very much resembles the work of a freelance translator.

Lastly, all the training institutions rely to some extent on the references provided for applicants, generally by their teachers in higher education. While care is evidently taken by referees to supply an accurate picture of their former students' academic performance and intellectual capabilities, it is surprising that only at Bradford has a set of documents been produced which guides referees towards a directly relevant assessment of candidates' suitability for the course (see Appendix VIII).

8.4 Design of specialist courses

While the value of specialist training courses in career terms has been demonstrated by the statistics quoted in section 8.1, some

questions remain to be answered concerning their overall design, in particular whether they are fully tailored to the needs of those who use language services. Ideally, a course should provide a structured and coherent training programme, at the end of which a student should not only be capable of working as a professional linguist, but also have been trained in areas and/or techniques that are of interest to employers. Two issues regarding course design that have surfaced on several occasions during this project concern the feasibility of combining the disciplines of interpreting and translation in a single course, and the inclusion in translation courses of an element of theory.

On the first of these questions, the main advantage of the combined courses available at Bath and Bradford is that students' career options are kept open for longer than would otherwise be the case. The notion that individuals fall into the categories of translator or interpreter according to their personality, and are therefore suited to either one occupation or the other, has been dispelled by Henderson (1984). Moreover, the data collected in the survey of ITI members indicate that the occupations not infrequently overlap, with 23% of all respondents being classified as translator-interpreters. Provided they show the necessary aptitude, therefore, it is hard to see why able linguists should not begin training in both disciplines. At Bradford they are able to specialize in either field after the first term of the course, while at Bath the diploma can be obtained even if a candidate fails to pass in one discipline, though this very seldom happens.

Supporters of the purist line taken by AIIC would no doubt argue that it is impossible to attain the same standards of performance on a combined course as on one devoted exclusively to interpreting. Such a debate cannot ultimately be resolved, since it is impossible to divorce the final standard reached from other factors such as selection procedures, the quality of tuition and the environment in which the course is held. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that the evidence from the EC Commission set out in Table 49 shows that applicants for interpreting work from Bath achieved a similar rate of success to those from PCL, where nothing but interpreting is taught.

Finally on this point, it is interesting to note that Taylor (1988), in a survey of former students at Bath, sought the views of those not working as interpreters on the simultaneous interpreting component of their course. The overwhelming majority confirmed that this component had been very useful in their training, listing as the main benefits derived: 'increased fluency in English expression; speed of reaction to language stimuli; increased ability to pick out the main theme of an argument' (p. 80).

As has been described in Chapter Five, the courses at Kent and Bradford include classes in various aspects of translation theory, whereas those at Bath and PCL do not. There is a definite clash of philosophies here, with one camp seeing a thorough grounding in theory as an essential part of professional training, the other regarding theory as a separate subject of limited application to the everyday work of translators. Once again, the argument is a

difficult one to resolve. If the organizers of a course can succeed in linking theoretical considerations to the practicalities of producing a satisfactory translation in return for payment, classes in theory can be deemed to form part of a coherent strategy for the course. The suspicion is apt to persist, however, that theory may on occasion be included to lend an air of academic respectability to what is otherwise a vocational and thus largely practical programme of training.

In the survey of employers conducted for the purposes of this research, 50% of the respondents employing in-house translation staff already had links with training courses and a further 31% considered that such contacts would be of use to them. Table 29 shows that 56% of the same category of respondents exploited links with training institutions to some extent when recruiting staff, a statistic which suggests that in general terms the courses are meeting the requirements of employers. There is scope, however, for developing these relations even further, since 63% of the employers of in-house translators who responded to the survey expressed a willingness to become involved in the design of training courses, 25% in their implementation and 13% in their funding. Such involvement could have a number of important effects, particularly as regards determining the language combinations to be offered and subsidiary languages taught, and further orienting the specialized fields covered by courses to the needs of specific employers. It will be recalled that one of the main criticisms voiced by employers of applicants for translation posts was their lack of technical expertise or experience in a particular field.

Targeting potential employers and collaborating with them is thus one way in which courses can move forward, making the transition from course to job as smooth as possible. According to the employers, the volume of language work is likely to increase in the short term. Tables 32, 36, 38 and 42 show the forecasts for different types of work, with Table 47 indicating that 42% of all predictions were for a rise in volume. It is doubtful, however, whether there will be a corresponding increase in the number of funded places on courses which train linguists to carry out this work. Following enquiries by the author concerning the policy on bursaries, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the DES, Mr Robert Jackson, replied as follows in a letter of 20 February 1990 (see Appendix VI): 'State bursaries are only offered in respect of courses of a professional or vocational nature. Several factors are taken into account before offering a quota to Course Directors. These factors include the demand for places, the entry requirements, the status of teaching staff, the course syllabus, and the employment prospects of successful students. Once a quota is decided upon our policy in recent years has been to try to maintain the quota at about the same level within limited resources. This cannot, however, be guaranteed and it is sometimes necessary to reduce a quota because of demand elsewhere. Data on the destination of successful students does of course provide useful corroboration of the demand by employers for highly qualified manpower.' It will be noted that there is no mention of increases in this statement, but only of reductions.

Another area in which developments are possible is that of post-experience training. In the survey of ITI members, 62% of all respondents expressed an interest in training of this kind, which could take the form of short courses covering specific technical fields or language 'refresher' courses geared to the needs of translators and interpreters. It would be logical for the facilities and expertise of the training institutions to be used for such courses, which could be operated on a self-financing basis.

8.5 Implications for employers

Table 43 in Chapter Seven shows that 84% of all respondents in the survey of employers made use of language services. As indicated in the previous section, 42% of these users predicted an increase in the volume of language work, with only 5% forecasting a fall. The clear implication of these figures is that demand for the services of translators and interpreters is likely to rise in the short term.

The survey also showed that 44% of the respondents employing in-house translators found such staff harder than average to recruit (Table 30), while 69% felt that applicants who had followed a specialist course in translation had an advantage over other candidates (Table 31). As regards the methods used by the employers to recruit or find language staff, Table 45 shows that 34% of all respondents made some use of links with training institutions. The figure is much higher (56%) in respect of in-house translation

staff, but lower for the engagement of freelances (25% for translators and 8% for interpreters). These findings seem to confirm that a substantial number of vacancies are being filled by direct recruitment from specialist training courses, it having already been established that the translation course at PCL is able to channel half its students into employment every year by this means.

For employers keen to avoid spending time and money on recruitment and subsequent training, it is presumably most convenient to have off-the-peg recruits available from a reliable source. The more links with courses are strengthened and formalized, as has occurred to some extent at PCL, the more a situation can be created which benefits all concerned: students are provided with a ready-made route into the professional milieu; courses are able to justify their existence and design, and further press their claims for increased funding; employers are supplied with competent staff, selected on the basis of their aptitude and ability, and trained with employers' needs in mind.

It is in this last respect that there is room for greater involvement on the part of the employers. If demand for qualified linguists is forecast to increase, but the supply of translators and/or interpreters from specialist courses is likely to remain static, it would be logical for training to be matched as closely as possible to the requirements of employers in order to minimize the wastage of resources.

Employers would thus have to specify the skills, language combinations and areas of specialized knowledge they required, at the same time guaranteeing to provide employment for a suitably qualified candidate. Courses would supply the relevant training, ideally with an appropriate input from employers. A natural extension of such arrangements would be for a system of sponsorship to be developed, with employer organizations subsidizing a number of students during their training, thereby freeing centrally funded places for other candidates.

Such schemes need not be confined to the private sector. A move towards this kind of involvement has recently been made by the European Parliament in an attempt to increase its supply of interpreters, particularly those offering less widely known languages. Staff interpreters are to be sent on a regular basis to participate in appropriate training programmes; students who successfully complete such a course and are able to interpret from two Community languages will be eligible for a grant enabling them to spend an extended period abroad learning an approved third language, on the understanding that they will subsequently work for the Parliament for an agreed time. It is surely in this direction that future developments in the field of translator and interpreter training are likely to occur.

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Abbreviations

AGCAS	Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services
AIIC	Association Internationale des Interprètes de Conférence
AMLC	Aston Modern Languages Club
Aslib	Association of special libraries and information bureaux
CILT	Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research
CITEAA	Conference of the Interpreter/Translator Educators Association of Australia

COIC	Careers & Occupational Information Centre
CRAC	Careers Research and Advisory Centre
DOG	Directory of Opportunities for Graduates
GO	Graduate Opportunities
ITI	Institute of Translation and Interpreting

QUESTIONNAIRE ON TRANSLATOR/INTERPRETER TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

This questionnaire forms part of a research project being carried out under the auspices of the University of Bath, the aims of which are to establish the nature of supply and demand in the language services sector and to determine the implications of this for the training of professional linguists. As a member of the ITI, your cooperation in completing it will be of particular assistance in achieving these aims. The questionnaire is entirely anonymous and the data collected will be used solely for the purposes of this project.

Please put a cross in the brackets (x) to answer "yes"; leaving the brackets empty () means the answer "no". Otherwise, please write the relevant details in the space provided. Thank you in advance for your help.

Profile

1. Do you work as a translator () ; as an interpreter () ?
2. Do you work as a staff linguist: in the private sector () ?
in a government service () ?
in an international body () ?
3. Do you work as a freelance () ; for an agency () ?
4. Is your mother tongue English () ? If not, what is it ?
5. Are you aged: under 25 () 26-35 () 36-45 () 45-55 () over 55 () ?

Training

5. Do you have a first degree () ? If so, in what subject(s) ?
- Did this degree include any element of training, for vocational purposes, in translation () or interpreting () ?
7. Have you taken a specialist course in translation and/or interpreting () ?
If so, where ? Was it time well spent () ?
8. Do you have a teaching qualification () ; experience of teaching () ?
9. Please state any other qualifications held
10. In your opinion, are the training opportunities available in the UK for would-be translators and interpreters:
sufficient () useful () geared to the employment market () ?
11. Would you be interested in post-experience training () ?

Entry to the profession

12. Did you first enter your profession:
by establishing yourself independently () ?
by applying for an advertised post or competition () ?
through a link with a training institution () or a personal contact () ?

(Please write any other comments you may have overleaf, and return to:
Mr S.P. Slade, Dept. of Modern Languages, University of Bath, Bath BA2 7AY)

(Dec. 1989)

QUESTIONNAIRE ON TRANSLATOR TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

This questionnaire forms part of a research project being carried out under the auspices of the University of Bath, the aims of which are to establish the nature of supply and demand in the language services sector and to determine the implications of this for the training of professional linguists. As a translator at the European Parliament, your cooperation in completing it will be of particular assistance in achieving these aims. The questionnaire is entirely anonymous and the data collected will be used solely for the purposes of this project.

Please put a cross in the brackets (x) to answer "yes"; leaving the brackets empty () means the answer "no". Otherwise, please write the relevant details in the space provided. Thank you in advance for your help.

1. Are you aged: under 25 () 26-35 () 36-45 () 45-55 () over 55 () ?
2. Do you have a first degree () ? If so, in what subject(s) ?
Did this degree include any element of training, for vocational purposes, in translation () or interpreting () ?
3. Have you taken a specialist course in translation and/or interpreting () ?
If so, where ? Was it time well spent () ?
4. Do you have a teaching qualification () ; experience of teaching () ?
5. Please state any other qualifications held
6. In your opinion, are the training opportunities available in the UK for would-be translators and interpreters:
sufficient () useful () geared to the employment market () ?
7. Would you be interested in post-experience training () ?
8. Did you first enter the profession:
by establishing yourself independently () ?
by applying for an advertised post or competition () ?
through a link with a training institution () or a personal contact () ?

Please write any other comments you may have overleaf, and return to:
Stephen Slade, Room 154, Schuman Building

(March 1990)

Department of Modern Languages
University of Bath
Claverton Down
Bath BA2 7AY

26 February 1990

Dear

I am writing to seek your assistance in a research project being carried out under the auspices of the University of Bath, the principal aim of which is to establish the nature of supply and demand in the language services sector, in particular for interpreters and translators.

As a recruiter of UK graduates, your cooperation in our survey of employers will be of particular help in achieving this aim.

I should therefore be most grateful if you could take the trouble to complete the enclosed questionnaires and return them to me at the address given above. Even if you are not a current user of language services, such information is of value in the survey. The questionnaires are entirely anonymous and the data collected will be used solely for the purposes of this project.

Thank you in advance for your help.

Yours faithfully,

Stephen Slade

Encl.

Please put a cross in the brackets (x) to answer "yes"; leaving the brackets empty () means the answer "no". Otherwise, please write the relevant details in the space provided. Thank you in advance for your help.

1. Do you use translation services ? ()
If so, are these in-house () or external () ?

IN-HOUSE

2. How many staff do you employ as translators: full-time ... part-time ...?
3. How much translation work is carried out by staff with other duties ?
None () Some () All () What are these duties ?
4. Do you recruit translation staff:
by advertisement ()
by personal contact or recommendation ()
through links with training institutions () ?
5. In general, is the task of recruiting translation staff:
harder than average () average () easier than average () ?
6. In your view, how do applicants who have followed a specialist course in translation stand in relation to other applicants ?
Better off () Worse off () On an equal footing ()
7. How many of your staff have such specialist training ?
8. What particular qualities do you look for in applicants for translation posts ? Please underline any which are seldom found.
.....
.....
9. What are the most common failings that lead to applicants being rejected ?
.....
.....
10. Do you have any links with translator training institutions ? ()
If not, would such links be of any use to you as an employer ? ()
11. Would you welcome the involvement of employers in the design of training courses (), their implementation () or any aspect of their funding () ?
12. In the short term, how do you see the trend in the volume of in-house translation work ? Increasing () Decreasing () No change ()

EXTERNAL

13. Do you use external services frequently () occasionally () rarely () ?
14. Do you use an agency () LX centre () or employ freelances directly () ?
If the latter, do you find your freelances:
by advertisement ()
by personal contact or recommendation ()
through links with training institutions () ?
15. In the short term, how do you see the trend in the volume of external translation work ? Increasing () Decreasing () No change ()

Please put a cross in the brackets (x) to answer "yes"; leaving the brackets empty () means the answer "no". Otherwise, please write the relevant details in the space provided. Thank you in advance for your help.

1. Do you use interpreting services ? ()
If so, are these in-house () or external () ?

IN-HOUSE

2. How many staff do you employ as interpreters: full-time ... part-time ...?
3. How much interpreting work is carried out by staff with other duties ?
None () Some () All () What are these duties ?
4. Do you recruit interpreting staff:
by advertisement ()
by personal contact or recommendation ()
through links with training institutions () ?
5. In general, is the task of recruiting interpreting staff:
harder than average () average () easier than average () ?
6. In your view, how do applicants who have followed a specialist course in interpreting stand in relation to other applicants ?
Better off () Worse off () On an equal footing ()
7. How many of your staff have such specialist training ?
8. Apart from interpreting ability, are there any other attributes which you regard as particularly desirable ?
.....
.....
9. Apart from lack of interpreting ability, are there any other frequent reasons for rejection ?
.....
10. Do you have any links with interpreter training institutions ? ()
If not, would such links be of any use to you as an employer ? ()
11. Would you welcome the involvement of employers in the design of training courses (), their implementation () or any aspect of their funding () ?
12. In the short term, how do you see the trend in the volume of in-house interpreting work ? Increasing () Decreasing () No change ()

EXTERNAL

13. Do you use external services frequently () occasionally () rarely () ?
14. Do you use an agency () LX centre () or employ freelances directly () ?
If the latter, do you find your freelances:
by advertisement ()
by personal contact or recommendation ()
through links with training institutions () ?
15. In the short term, how do you see the trend in the volume of external interpreting work ? Increasing () Decreasing () No change ()

APPENDIX IV

LIST OF EMPLOYERS SURVEYED (CHAPTER SEVEN)

Abel & Imray
Allied Dunbar
Allied Irish Bank
Andersen Consulting
AT&T Network Systems
Automotive Products
Babcock Energy
Bank of England
Barclays Bank
BBC
Beazer Construction Services
Bechtel
Beecham Pharmaceuticals
BOC
British Aerospace
British Gas
British Nuclear Fuels
British Coal
BP International
British Rail
British Steel
British Sugar
CAB International
Collins
Conoco
Coopers & Lybrand
Costain Group
Courtaulds
Dairy Crest
Deloitte Haskins & Sells
Department of the Environment
Department of Trade and Industry
Dow Corning
Electronic Data Systems
Esso Group
Eurotherm International
Ferranti
Fisons
Ford Motor Co.
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Foster Wheeler Energy
GEC-Marconi
Geest
Glaxo
Grand Metropolitan
Guinness
Health and Safety Executive
ICI

IMI
Hawker Siddeley
Hewlett Packard
Hickson Timber Products
IBM
International Maritime Organization
Infomat
Inmos
Interlingua TTI
Jaguar Cars
Kodak
Joint Technical Language Service (GCHQ)
John Lewis Partnership
Lloyds Bank
Lucas Industries
Marks & Clerk
Marks and Spencer
Marley
Merck, Sharp & Dohme
Midland Bank
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Mobil
Multilingual Services
National Audit Office
National Westminster Bank
National Power
NCR
Oracle Corporation
Peat, Marwick Mclintock
Proctor & Gamble
Racal Electronics
Randall-Woolcott Services
Rank Hovis McDougall
Rolls Royce
Rover Group
Rowntree
Royal Bank of Scotland
RTZ
RWS Translation
Shell International
Siemens
Smiths Industries
STC
Taylor Woodrow
Thorn EMI
Touche Ross
Unigate
Unilever
Vauxhall Motors
Wellcome Foundation
Westlands Helicopters
Wiggins Teape

UNIVERSITY OF BATH

Questionnaires like this are being distributed to all students completing postgraduate courses in interpreting and/or translation in 1987, as part of a wide-ranging study of the training of professional linguists in the UK and their employment prospects. The findings of this study will be of use both to the institutions which run these courses and to future would-be interpreters and translators, and your cooperation in answering the questions below will be much appreciated. The questionnaires are anonymous, and the information given will be presented only on a general and not an individual basis.

BATH

1. Would you describe yourself as bilingual ?
2. Had you worked full-time for more than 6 months before starting this course ?
.....
3. How did you hear about the course ?
4. Did you apply for any parallel interpreting or translation courses in the UK ? If so, which ?
.....
5. Do you expect to be able to earn a living solely from interpreting and/or translation ? ..
6. Do you anticipate being based in the UK or abroad ?
7. Have you been interviewed or tested for employment since beginning the course ?
.....
8. Do you have any firm offers of employment at present ?
9. Do you think that following the course has enhanced your employment prospects in general ?
.....
10. Are you considering pursuing any further course of training in the near future ? If so, in what field ?
.....
11. Are there any aspects of the course that you have found either particularly helpful or unsatisfactory ?
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

MM



AH RJ/0117/1001

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

ELIZABETH HOUSE YORK ROAD LONDON SE1 7PH

TELEPHONE 01-934 9000

FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE

The Rt Hon Peter Walker MBE MP
House of Commons
LONDON
SW1A 0AA

20 FEB 1990

Thank you for your letter of 10 January, addressed to Alan Howarth enclosing a letter dated 22 December from your constituent, Mr Stephen Slade, of Walnut House, Evesham Road, Church Lench, Worcestershire, who is seeking information about postgraduate courses in applied language studies in connection with his doctoral research at the University of Bath. I am replying because this falls within my area of ministerial responsibility.

I attach on a separate sheet the statistical information which is readily available. If Mr Slade requires further information then the institutions concerned may be able to help.

State bursaries are only offered in respect of courses of a professional or vocational nature. Several factors are taken into account before offering a quota to Course Directors. These factors include the demand for places, the entry requirements, the status of teaching staff, the course syllabus, and the employment prospects of successful students. Once a quota is decided upon our policy in recent years has been to try to maintain the quota at about the same level within limited resources. This cannot, however, be guaranteed and it is sometimes necessary to reduce a quota because of demand elsewhere. Data on the destination of successful students does of course provide useful corroboration of the demand by employers for highly qualified manpower.

ROBERT JACKSON

VOCATIONAL COURSES IN LANGUAGES, TRANSLATIONS, AND INTERPRETING

A. NUMBERS

QUOTAS OF STATE BURSARIES

	1986/7	1987/8	1988/9	1989/90
Uni of Bath	9	8	8	7
Uni of Bradford	11	10	11	10
Uni of Kent	12	11	12	11
Central London Poly	18	18	18	18

B. STUDENT DESTINATIONS (DES funded finishers)

1986/87	Employment in subject area	Teaching	Further Study	Other Employment	Un- employment	Not Known
Uni of Bath	6	-	-	-	-	2
Uni of Bradford	N o F i g u r e s A v a i l a b l e					
Uni of Kent	11	-	1	-	-	-
Central London Poly	17	-	-	-	-	1

Statistics were not collected for 1987/88; figures for 1988/89 will be available in about 2 months time from Mr Richard Laskier, Room 9/1, DES Elizabeth House, London SE1 7PH (tel: 01-934-9339).

FIRST DESTINATIONS OF GRADUATES - 1974-1980
(HERIOT-WATT)

	<u>Using Languages</u>	<u>Not using Languages</u>	<u>Total</u>
Postgraduate study	<u>14</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>20</u>
Civil Service (incl. M.O.D.)	10 (6)	3	13
B.B.C.	1		1
European Community	4		4
N.A.T.O.	1		1
U.N.	1		1
Customs Co-operation Council	1		1
Various European/international organisations	5		5
Foreign government posts	6		6
Language teaching/assistantships:			
Temporary	14		14
Permanent	14		14
Commerce/industry/publishing	25	6	31
Freelance interpreting & translating	5		5
Miscellaneous	1	8	9
Unknown	—	—	<u>5</u>
	<u>88</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>110</u>

N.B. European/international organisations includes:

OPEC
Reuters
Int. Olive Oil Corporation
Eurovision (Switzerland)

Miscellaneous includes:

Librarianship
Royal Navy
Social Work
Married - not seeking employment

Modern Languages Centre



BRADFORD WEST YORKSHIRE BD7 1DP
Telephone BRADFORD (0274) 733466
Telex 51309 UNIBFD G

RWWP/SBH

.....

Dear

The above-named has applied for admission to our course for the Postgraduate Diploma in Interpreting and Translating and has given your name as a referee in respect of

We are enclosing a questionnaire which should be returned, if possible within seven days, to:

The Postgraduate Admissions Secretary
Modern Languages Centre
University of Bradford
Bradford
West Yorkshire BD7 1DP.

There are two reasons for our asking you to complete the questionnaire: we know, from personal experience, the time-consuming demands of conscientiously written references of conventional form and we would like to ease the referee's burden in this respect; furthermore, we attach great importance to the referee giving a frank statement on specific qualities of the applicant's linguistic potential.

We have therefore designed the questionnaire to facilitate an accurate assessment of the applicant's suitability for the course. Should you however not wish to use the questionnaire - and we fully appreciate the reasons for such a standpoint - then we should be grateful if you would base your reply as far as possible on the questions contained in it.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R.W.W. Pollock'.

R.W.W. Pollock
Course Tutor

Enc.

UNIVERSITY OF BRADFORD

POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN INTERPRETING AND TRANSLATING

Confidential Assessment of

1. For how long have you known the applicant, and in what capacity?
2. Applicant's degree subjects (please state whether joint/combined, main/subsidiary, honours/ordinary):

Date of award of degree:

Class of degree:

(For Final Year Undergraduates, please give an estimate)

Academic strong and weak points of the applicant:

3. In relation to other students of his/her year, how would you rate the applicant?

In the top
10%In the top
20%In the top
50%

Average

Below

- (a) in terms of general intellectual capacity

- (b) in translation, including English style and appreciation of semantic nuance

- (c) in oral expression, in English and the foreign language

4. What impression does the applicant make in discussion, debate, presenting an argument, etc.?

5. If the applicant were to be entrusted with an important and difficult translation, would you recommend him/her for the task

unreservedly strongly happily with reservations only with reluctance?

6. If the applicant were to act as a guide and ad hoc interpreter for an important foreign visitor, would you expect him/her to perform

exceptionally well very well reasonably well less well than the average linguist unimpressively?

7. Has the applicant shown any active interest in translating or interpreting as a career? How do you rate the applicant's chance of success

(a) as a translator

(b) as an interpreter?

8. How would you describe the applicant in terms of personality?

9. Any other comments or information, including details of the applicant's relevant experience and outside interests:

Signature

Position

Date

Thank you for your cooperation

UNIVERSITY OF BRADFORDPOSTGRADUATE DIPLOMAININTERPRETING AND TRANSLATINGEXAMINATIONS 1983TRANSLATION PROJECT : FROM FRENCHMonday 16th May at 0900 hours toWednesday 18th May at 1200 hours

A translation of the attached text is required for the British publisher of a popular science magazine, with a view to publication. All captions and details of illustrations should be included and attention drawn to any points that require checking or revision. The original of the drawings on page 28 (in colour) may be consulted in Room 2.15b.

Source: Science et Vie No. 785 (February 1983), pp. 26 - 30 and 155.

HYPERTENSION: LES BÊTA-BLOQUANTS SUR LA SELLETTE!

Selon le Syndicat national de l'industrie pharmaceutique, en 1981, vingt millions de boîtes de bêta-bloquants ont été vendues en France, et plus de deux millions de boîtes ont été consommées dans les hôpitaux. Il s'agit d'un médicament qui s'adresse essentiellement aux personnes qui souffrent d'hypertension. Or, on vient de s'apercevoir que ses effets bénéfiques étaient limités, et que, globalement, son action comportait plus d'inconvénients que d'avantages.

● Découverts il y a quelques années et utilisés principalement pour combattre le stress et soulager le cœur dans l'hypertension artérielle, les bêta-bloquants (qui doivent leur nom au fait qu'ils bloquent les récepteurs bêta présents sur la membrane des cellules musculaires cardiaques et artérielles) semblaient promis à un bel avenir. Vendus en France sous 30 présentations différentes, ils ont représenté en 1981 un chiffre d'affaires de 85 millions de francs.

Or, des enquêtes épidémiologiques et des travaux scientifiques très poussés viennent de montrer que ces médicaments avaient des effets connexes en contradiction totale avec leur effet principal. En clair, s'ils réduisent effectivement la tension au niveau du cœur, ils ne la diminuent nullement, bien au contraire, au niveau des artères, et sont donc incapables de prévenir l'angine de poitrine et l'infarctus. Mais, pour mieux comprendre leur action, et surtout les limites de celle-ci, il nous faut d'abord rappeler quelques notions essentielles concernant l'hypertension artérielle, l'angine de poitrine et l'infarctus du myocarde.

Actuellement, plus de cinq millions de Français souffrent d'hypertension artérielle. Il s'agit d'un trouble grave, dont les causes, multiples, sont encore mal élucidées (on parle d'influences génétiques, nerveuses, hormonales, rénales), et qui est indirectement responsable de près de 30% des décès dans les pays industrialisés.

Ce que le public et les médecins ont pris l'habitude d'appeler tension artérielle est en réalité la pression du sang à l'intérieur des artères. Pour expliquer ce qu'est cette pression et les facteurs qui la déterminent, prenons une image :

celle d'un ballon élastique rempli d'eau. La pression à l'intérieur du ballon dépend du volume d'eau qu'il contient et de l'extensibilité de ses parois, c'est-à-dire de leur capacité à être étirées. Si les parois sont très extensibles, le ballon pourra absorber une grande quantité supplémentaire d'eau avec seulement une petite augmentation de pression ; par contre, une petite quantité supplémentaire d'eau provoquera une grande augmentation de pression si les parois du ballon résistent fortement à l'étirement.

Il en est de même pour les artères. Chaque fois que le cœur se contracte (systole), il envoie une certaine quantité de sang dans les artères. Si une égale quantité de sang quittait en même temps ces vaisseaux pour gagner les artéioles, le volume total de sang dans les artères demeurerait constant et la pression artérielle ne changerait pas. Or, ce n'est pas le cas. Une quantité égale seulement au tiers du volume envoyé par le cœur quitte les artères à chaque systole. Le volume en excès distend donc les artères et augmente la pression artérielle. Lorsque la contraction du cœur cesse, les parois artérielles étirées reviennent passivement à leur état antérieur — comme un caoutchouc tendu qui se relâche — et la pression artérielle continue de faire passer le sang dans les artéioles. Au fur et à mesure que le sang quitte les artères, la pression diminue, mais la contraction cardiaque suivante survient tandis qu'il y a encore dans les artères une quantité de sang suffisante pour distendre partiellement leurs parois, si bien que la pression artérielle ne tombe jamais à zéro.

On voit que l'augmentation de la pression artérielle peut résulter, soit d'une augmentation

du débit cardiaque, soit d'une moindre élasticité des artères, soit des deux à la fois. Dans l'hypertension classique, ce sont essentiellement les artères qui sont en cause : pour diverses raisons encore mal connues, leur diamètre se rétrécit, ce qui, d'une part, diminue leur élasticité et, d'autre part, augmente leur résistance au passage du sang, deux facteurs qui font monter la pression (ou tension) artérielle.

Quand cette pression est forte, non seulement le cœur doit fournir un effort supplémentaire, mais chacune de ses contractions provoque un véritable "coup de bouloir" sur les parois des artères. Au rythme de 100 000 contractions par vingt-quatre heures, ces "coups de bouloir" finissent à la longue par endommager les parois des artères : celles-ci deviennent plus fragiles (ce qui peut occasionner des accidents graves : hémorragies cérébrales, hémipariés) ou plus vulnérables à la pénétration de certaines graisses (athéromes). Dans ce dernier cas, il se forme des dépôts sur la surface interne des artères, dépôts qui diminuent très notablement leur souplesse et, surtout, rétrécissent progressivement leur calibre, faisant encore monter un peu plus la tension.

La situation est particulièrement critique lorsque ces dépôts se forment dans les artères coronaires, c'est-à-dire celles qui irriguent le muscle cardiaque. En se bouchant, elles restreignent le débit sanguin et, par conséquent, l'apport d'oxygène au cœur ; il en résulte une anoxie (diminution de la quantité d'oxygène que le sang distribue aux tissus) plus ou moins sévère et plus ou moins prolongée au niveau du myocarde (tissu musculaire qui constitue la partie contractile du cœur).

Quand l'anoxie est légère et intermittente — liée, par exemple, à l'effort physique —, elle n'entraîne ordinairement aucune lésion du myocarde. Elle se traduit seulement, au moment de l'effort ou juste après celui-ci, par une brève douleur dans la zone du cœur et par un électrocardiogramme présentant des altérations réversibles. C'est l'angine de poitrine⁽¹⁾.

Mais quand l'anoxie est totale, c'est-à-dire quand les artères coronaires sont complètement bouchées, il se produit une lésion définitive plus ou moins étendue du muscle cardiaque. C'est l'infarctus, ordinairement révélé par une douleur thoracique intense et durable.

L'infarctus peut également apparaître à la suite d'un type particulier d'angine de poitrine, dite "angine de Prinzmetal", du nom du cardiologue américain qui l'a décrite le premier, au début des années 60. Dans ce type d'affection, les artères coronaires ne sont plus obstruées par

une accumulation de particules graisseuses, mais par un spasme nerveux ayant pour siège les fibres musculaires des vaisseaux. En se contractant, ces fibres diminuent brusquement le diamètre des artères, allant parfois jusqu'à les obstruer totalement. Le débit sanguin s'en trouve diminué ou bloqué ; et le muscle cardiaque, privé partiellement ou totalement d'oxygène, est plus ou moins gravement lésé.

Jusqu'à une époque assez récente, on accordait peu d'importance à ce type d'angine. On considérait qu'il y avait, d'un côté, l'angine véritable, due à l'athérosclérose (dépôts d'athéromes sur les parois des artères coronaires) et, de l'autre, un phénomène nerveux sans grande conséquence. Aujourd'hui, l'opinion des médecins a beaucoup changé : ils estiment désormais qu'environ 20% des cas d'angine de poitrine sont de type Prinzmetal.

Pour prévenir ou soigner l'angine de poitrine, qu'elle soit classique ou de type Prinzmetal, on intervient sur la tension artérielle, que l'on s'efforce de faire baisser. Pour cela, on fait appel à quatre catégories de médicaments, qui peuvent être utilisés isolément ou en association :

Les diurétiques. Ces produits, parce qu'ils favorisent l'élimination du sel et de l'eau, réduisent le volume du sang qui circule dans l'organisme. Or, nous l'avons vu, la pression qui règne à l'intérieur d'un ballon rempli de liquide dépend autant du volume du liquide que de l'élasticité du ballon. Avec les diurétiques, en diminuant le volume sanguin, on abaisse la tension artérielle. Longtemps, on a reproché aux diurétiques d'évacuer aussi le potassium, métal indispensable au bon fonctionnement des échanges cellulaires ; mais il en existe maintenant qui n'ont plus cet inconvénient. D'après certaines estimations, l'administration de diurétiques serait suffisante pour ramener la pression artérielle à la normale chez un quart des sujets hypertendus.

Les antihypertenseurs. Il s'agit de substances qui s'opposent à l'action de la noradrénaline, une hormone sécrétée par les glandes surrénales, et qui a la propriété de diminuer le calibre des vaisseaux sanguins, donc d'augmenter leur résistance au passage du sang et, par conséquent, de faire monter la pression artérielle. Ces médicaments, d'une efficacité certaine, ont cependant de nombreux effets secondaires (états dépressifs, somnolence, impuissance) que les fabricants essaient peu à peu d'éliminer.

Les vaso-dilatateurs. Comme leur nom l'indique, ils produisent une dilatation des vaisseaux par le relâchement des fibres musculaires de leurs parois. Ils présentent toutefois un certain nombre d'inconvénients (apparition d'œdèmes, hirsutisme, c'est-à-dire développement excessif du système pileux) et ne sont employés qu'en cas d'urgence.

(suite du texte page 30)

(1) Le mot "angine" n'a rien à voir ici avec la classique inflammation de la gorge. C'est une traduction défectueuse du mot latin *angor*, qui signifie serrement, oppression. D'ailleurs, le langage médical utilise les deux termes *angor* et *angine de poitrine*.

LES ANTICALCIQUES: DES CONCURRENTS DE CHOIX POUR

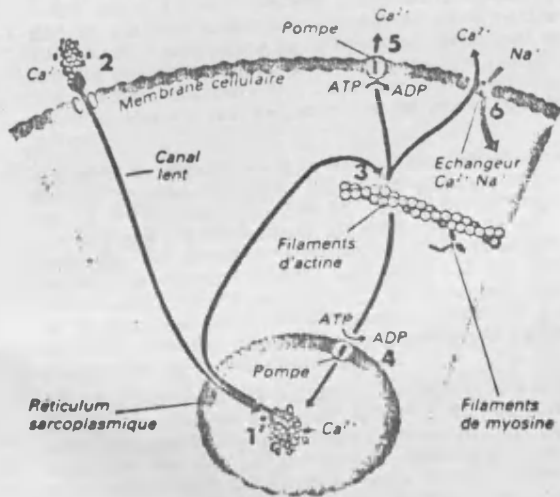
Retraçant le rôle du calcium dans la contraction d'une cellule musculaire, les quatre dessins ci-dessous expliquent pourquoi les bêta-bloquants sont moins adaptés au traitement de l'hypertension que les anticalciques: d'une part, dans le cas d'un muscle strié (A et B), d'autre part dans celui d'un muscle lisse (C et D), chaque ensemble étant considéré respectivement en activité normale et pendant un stress.

A. Cellule musculaire striée du cœur en activité normale. Comme toute cellule musculaire, une cellule cardiaque a besoin pour se contracter d'un apport de calcium (Ca^{2+}). Ce calcium, procuré par l'alimentation, est présent en deux endroits: à l'intérieur même de la cellule, dans une poche appelée réticulum sarcoplasmique (1); à l'extérieur de la cellule, dans le liquide qui la baigne. Juste avant

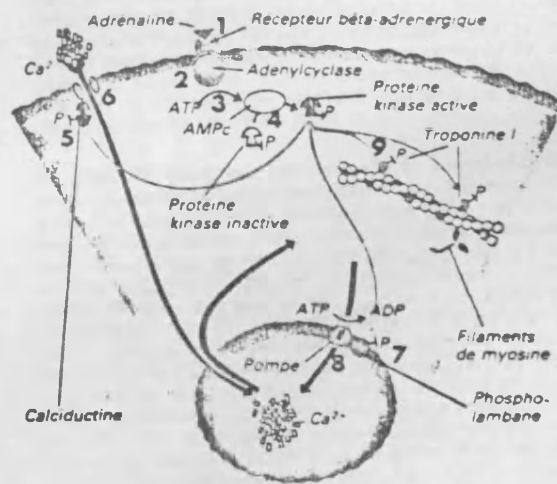
la systole (contraction du muscle cardiaque), le calcium présent à l'extérieur de la cellule pénètre en petite quantité dans celle-ci par de minces canaux, dits "canaux lents" (2). Ce calcium extérieur joue le rôle de déclencheur: sitôt qu'il atteint le réticulum sarcoplasmique, celui-ci éjecte tout le calcium qu'il contient et le dirige vers les filaments d'actine et de myosine tendus à l'intérieur de la cellule (3). Ces filaments glissent les uns sur les autres et se raccourcissent. La cellule se contracte: c'est la systole.

Pour que la cellule se décontracte, deux opérations sont nécessaires:

1° Il faut que le calcium qui active les filaments revienne dans le réticulum sarcoplasmique. C'est une pompe (4) logée dans la membrane du réticulum



A. Cellule musculaire striée du cœur en activité normale



B. Cellule musculaire striée du cœur pendant un stress



C. Cellule lisse de la paroi d'une artère en activité normale



D. Cellule lisse de la paroi d'une artère pendant un stress.

LE TRAITEMENT DE L'HYPERTENSION

qui va se charger de ce travail. L'énergie nécessaire à son fonctionnement lui est fournie par la dégradation de molécules d'ATP (adénosine triphosphate) en molécules d'ADP (adénosine diphosphate).

2° Il faut également que le calcium venu de l'extérieur retourne à son lieu d'origine. Pour cela, deux pompes logées dans la membrane cellulaire vont entrer en action. La première fonctionne comme la pompe du reticulum, grâce à l'énergie fournie par la dégradation de l'ATP (5). La seconde se comporte plutôt comme un échangeur, remplaçant le calcium qui sort par du sodium (Na^+) qui entre (6). Lorsque tout le calcium a quitté la cellule, le cycle est bouclé: tout est en place pour une nouvelle contraction.

B. Cellule musculaire striée du cœur pendant un stress. En cas de stress (une émotion par exemple), tout l'organisme se mobilise. A cette fin, il fait appel à une hormone, l'adrénaline, sécrétée par les glandes surrénales. Au niveau de la cellule cardiaque, l'adrénaline va, d'une part, accélérer le rythme des contractions (effet chronotrope positif), d'autre part, accroître leur intensité (effet inotrope positif). Voyons les mécanismes de cette double action.

Au point de départ, il y a la fixation de l'adrénaline sur un récepteur appelé "bêta-adrénergique" situé sur la membrane cellulaire (1). Cette fixation agit comme une clé de contact. Un enzyme, l'adénylcyclase (2), est activé et transforme l'ATP en AMPc (adénosine monophosphate cyclique). Cette AMPc (3) active à son tour une protéine, la protéine kinase (4), dont le rôle est primordial, puisque c'est elle qui va déclencher les réactions responsables de l'effet inotrope et de l'effet chronotrope.

1° La protéine kinase apporte du phosphore à une substance dénommée calmoduline (5), laquelle, ainsi phosphorylée, va élargir l'orifice des canaux lents (6). Résultat: davantage de calcium extérieur va pénétrer dans la cellule, ce qui aura pour conséquence d'accroître la force des contractions (effet inotrope positif).

2° La protéine kinase apporte également du phosphore à une autre substance, le phospholamban (7), qui a une action stimulante sur la pompe à calcium logée dans la membrane du reticulum (8). Cette pompe travaillant plus vite, c'est-à-dire faisant rentrer plus rapidement dans la poche du reticulum le calcium éjecté dans la cellule, c'est tout le cycle contraction-décontraction qui est accéléré (effet chronotrope positif).

3° Mais pour que la vitesse du rythme cardiaque soit réellement augmentée, il ne suffit pas que la pompe marche plus vite, il faut aussi que la mécanique suive. Autrement dit, il faut que les filaments qui assurent la contraction de la cellule ne grippent pas. Pour cela, ils doivent être parfaitement "lubrifiés". Là encore, la protéine kinase va intervenir: en fournissant du phosphore à la troponine I présente sur les filaments d'actine (9), elle va favoriser le glissement de ces derniers sur les filaments de myosine.

C. Cellule musculaire lisse de la paroi d'une artère en activité normale. Les cellules musculaires de la paroi des artères, du fait de leur structure lisse, n'obéissent pas aux mêmes mécanismes que les cellules striées du cœur. Toutefois, elles ont

besoin, elles aussi, de calcium pour se contracter. Comme précédemment, le calcium pénètre dans la cellule par les canaux lents, dont l'ouverture est commandée soit par un phénomène électrique de dépolarisation (1), soit par une hormone, la noradrénaline (sécrétée par les extrémités des cellules nerveuses qui tapissent la paroi artérielle) qui vient se fixer sur un récepteur appelé "alpha-adrénergique" (2). Une fois dans la cellule, le calcium vient se combiner à une protéine, la calmoduline (3) qui devient alors capable de transformer la myosine kinase inactive en myosine kinase active (4). A son tour, la myosine kinase active transforme la myosine en phosphomyosine (5), et celle-ci, en se liant aux filaments d'actine, provoque leur contraction (6).

La décontraction survient quand la phosphomyosine, sous l'action d'un enzyme, la phosphatase (7), est reconvertie en myosine (8). Les filaments reviennent alors à leur position initiale. En même temps que se produit ce relâchement, le calcium est récupéré par le reticulum endoplasmique (une poche semblable au reticulum sarcoplasmique de la cellule cardiaque) au moyen d'une pompe (9) activée par la calmoduline et tirant son énergie de la dégradation de l'ATP en ADP.

D. Cellule musculaire lisse de la paroi d'une artère pendant un stress. Dans une situation de stress, à tous ces phénomènes vient s'ajouter l'action de l'adrénaline. Celle-ci, comme dans la cellule cardiaque, vient se fixer sur un récepteur dit "bêta-adrénergique" (1) logé dans la membrane cellulaire. Cette fixation déclenche l'activation d'un enzyme, l'adénylcyclase (2), qui transforme l'ATP en AMPc (3). A son tour, l'AMPc active une protéine kinase (4), laquelle transforme la myosine kinase inactive, non plus en myosine kinase active, comme dans le cas précédent, mais en myosine kinase phosphorylée (5). Or, la myosine kinase phosphorylée est beaucoup moins agissante que l'autre. Résultat: la contraction des filaments est très faible, voire inexistante (6). On voit donc que l'effet de l'adrénaline sur les cellules musculaires des artères est inverse de celui qu'elle produit sur les cellules cardiaques: au lieu de renforcer les contractions, elle les diminue ou les supprime, faisant du même coup tomber la tension artérielle.

En résumé, qu'il s'agisse d'une cellule musculaire du cœur ou d'une cellule musculaire des artères, le calcium a la même action: il conditionne les contractions. En revanche, l'adrénaline a une action différenciée selon le rythme de la cellule dans laquelle elle se fixe: action contractante sur le cœur, relaxante sur les artères.

On peut maintenant plus facilement comprendre la façon dont agissent les bêta-bloquants et les anticalciques. Les premiers, en s'opposant à l'action de l'adrénaline, provoquent une baisse de l'activité cardiaque, mais un accroissement des contractions artérielles, d'où une augmentation de la tension (sauf dans le cas des bêta-bloquants cardio-sélectifs qui n'agissent, eux, que sur le cœur). En revanche, les anticalciques, en restreignant le passage du calcium dans la cellule musculaire produisent des effets parfaitement concordants sur le cœur et sur les artères: ils abaissent le rythme et l'amplitude des contractions cardiaques; ils diminuent ou suppriment les contractions artérielles.

(suite de la page 27)

Les bêta-bloquants. Ce sont des substances qui s'opposent à l'action de l'adrénaline en prenant la place de cette hormone sur les récepteurs bêta disséminés à la surface des cellules musculaires cardiaques et artérielles. L'adrénaline, appelée parfois "hormone d'urgence", est un stimulant mobilisateur de l'organisme; elle est sécrétée surtout dans les situations de stress (agressions, colère, angoisse, etc.). Son action sur le système cardio-vasculaire est double: au niveau du cœur, elle accroît le rythme et la puissance des contractions cardiaques; au niveau des vaisseaux, elle relâche au contraire les fibres musculaires et dilate les artères. Ainsi, l'organisme, mieux irrigué, est plus apte à se défendre.

Les bêta-bloquants, en s'opposant à l'action de l'adrénaline, produisent des effets exactement inverses. D'un côté, ils diminuent en intensité et en rapidité les contractions du myocarde; de l'autre, ils resserrent les fibres musculaires des vaisseaux et, partant, rétrécissent le calibre des artères. Cela étant, une double conclusion s'impose: s'il est indéniable que les bêta-bloquants ont une action bénéfique au niveau du cœur, dont ils diminuent le travail, apportant un bien-être passager au patient hypertendu (d'où, d'ailleurs, leur succès), en revanche, au niveau des artères, ils sont loin d'avoir l'effet hypotenseur des trois précédentes catégories de médicaments. En effet, en contractant les vaisseaux, ils provoquent au contraire une élévation de la pression, avec toutes les conséquences fâcheuses que cela peut entraîner.

C'est à la suite d'enquêtes épidémiologiques réalisées aux États-Unis que sont nés les premiers doutes sur les vertus des bêta-bloquants. Les études en question ont consisté à administrer pendant plusieurs années ces médicaments à des sujets gros fumeurs et grands buveurs, afin de prévenir chez eux une éventuelle hypertension artérielle. Les résultats de ces expérimentations ont fait l'objet d'un article publié au début de cette année dans le *New England Journal of Medicine* (2). Ils sont à vrai dire surprenants: on a dénombré autant d'infarctus chez les patients traités aux bêta-bloquants que chez les sujets d'un groupe témoin qui n'avaient reçu aucune médication particulière. Autrement dit, les bêta-bloquants n'avaient pas empêché l'hypertension de se manifester. Ils l'auraient même, dans une certaine mesure, stimulée. En effet, selon le signataire de l'article, le Dr Michael F. Oliver, ils auraient favorisé les dépôts lipidiques (athéromes) dans les artères, accélérant le développement de l'athérosclérose, si redoutable quand elle touche les artères coronaires.

Mais ce n'est pas tout. Les bêta-bloquants seraient également responsables d'autres complications. Toujours selon le Dr Oliver, le practolol (3), substance bêta-bloquante, exposerait à la

cécité par dessiccation de la cornée, ainsi qu'à la péritonite, à la péricardite (inflammation de la membrane qui enveloppe le cœur) et aux arthropathies de toutes sortes (arthrite, arthrose, rhumatisme). Le propranolol, autre substance bêta-bloquante, occasionnerait, lui, des troubles de la circulation périphérique.

D'ailleurs, une nouvelle étude entreprise par l'équipe du Dr Ramsay, à l'université de Sheffield (Grande-Bretagne), vient de confirmer les résultats des enquêtes épidémiologiques réalisées aux États-Unis. Le Dr Ramsay a voulu savoir si l'administration de bêta-bloquants était susceptible de provoquer une baisse de tension chez des sujets consommant régulièrement du tabac et du café. Ici, une parenthèse: normalement, la tension (ou pression) artérielle varie, à chaque contraction du cœur, entre une valeur maximale (12 à 15 cm de mercure au moment de la systole) et une valeur minimale (7 à 9 cm de mercure au moment de la diastole, c'est-à-dire quand le cœur relâche sa contraction). Lorsqu'un sujet fume une cigarette, on observe une élévation de 10 mm de la valeur maximale et de 8 mm de la valeur minimale, pendant une période de 15 minutes. De même, l'absorption d'une tasse de café augmente le maximum de 14 mm et le minimum de 10 mm, pendant environ 25 minutes. Enfin, la consommation simultanée de tabac et de café provoque une montée de tension de 12 mm pour le maximum et de 10 mm pour le minimum, cela pendant au moins deux heures.

Cette parenthèse refermée, revenons aux travaux du Dr Ramsay. Celui-ci a constaté que l'administration de bêta-bloquants ne faisait pas baisser de façon significative la tension artérielle des sujets consommateurs de tabac et de café. Avec le propranolol, par exemple, la hausse temporaire était de 9 mm pour le maximum et de 8 mm pour le minimum; avec l'oxprenolol, elle était respectivement de 12 et de 9 mm, soit presque de même valeur que pour un sujet non traité aux bêta-bloquants.

Mais pourquoi alors les bêta-bloquants ont-ils une action relaxante sur le cœur et non sur les artères? Vraisemblablement, croit-on aujourd'hui, parce que les muscles qui se trouvent dans ces organes ne sont pas de même nature: le myocarde est un muscle strié, alors que les fibres musculaires des artères sont lisses.

Cela dit, si, comme l'ont démontré les travaux mentionnés ci-dessus, les bêta-bloquants sont loin — c'est le moins que l'on puisse dire — d'avoir une action positive dans la lutte contre l'hypertension, ils peuvent même avoir des conséquences dramatiques lorsqu'ils sont administrés à des patients souffrant d'angine de Prinzmetal. En effet l'action constrictive qu'ils exercent sur les artères ne fait que renforcer le spasme nerveux propre à cette maladie. D'où des risques très sérieux d'angine de poitrine, et même d'infarctus. Un comble pour un médicament qui cherche à prévenir ces accidents!

(suite du texte page 155)

(2) Volume 306, 4 février 1982, page 297.

(3) Le practolol est retiré de la vente en France depuis le 9 mai 1975 car il a été reconnu cancérigène.

BÊTA-BLOQUANTS

(suite de la page 30)

En raison de ces multiples inconvénients, et parfois même de ces dangers, la recherche pharmaceutique s'est orientée récemment vers la mise au point de bêta-bloquants dits "cardio-sélectifs", qui conservent leur pouvoir relaxant au niveau du cœur, mais n'ont plus au niveau des artères l'action néfaste des bêta-bloquants classiques. Cette efficacité différenciée est rendue possible par le fait qu'il existe deux types de récepteurs bêta : les bêta 1 pour le cœur et les bêta 2 pour les fibres musculaires. Jusqu'ici, la plupart des bêta-bloquants proposés sur le marché agissaient indifféremment sur les deux types de récepteurs. Mais, depuis peu, on a découvert des substances qui bloquaient préférentiellement les récepteurs bêta 1, et l'on s'est mis à fabriquer des drogues "cardio-sélectives". Celles-ci gardent leurs effets bénéfiques sur le cœur mais, en intervenant de manière plus diffuse sur les récepteurs bêta 2, elles augmentent moins la tension des parois artérielles. Sont-elles pour autant capables de vaincre l'hypertension ? Non, si l'on en croit le Dr Ramsay, qui a testé l'une d'entre elles, l'aténolol : la baisse de tension engendrée par ce bêta-bloquant "cardio-sélectif" est trop faible pour être considérée comme digne d'intérêt.

Aujourd'hui, tous les espoirs sont reportés sur une nouvelle génération de médicaments, les anticalciques, qui, en raison d'un mode d'action différent, ne présentent plus les inconvénients des bêta-bloquants et paraissent notamment tout à fait adaptés au traitement de l'angine de Prinzmetal. Comme son nom l'indique, un anticalcique, ou antagoniste du calcium, est une substance qui s'oppose au passage du calcium à travers les membranes des cellules musculaires. Or, pour qu'un muscle se contracte, il faut que du calcium pénètre dans ses cellules par de petits canaux répartis à la surface de celles-ci. Si un élément quelconque vient contrarier cette pénétration, la contraction du muscle est considérablement atténuée. C'est précisément à ce niveau qu'interviennent les anticalciques.

Le grand avantage des anticalciques sur les bêta-bloquants, c'est qu'ils agissent de la même façon sur le muscle strié du cœur et sur les muscles lisses des artères. Ils produisent donc simultanément une baisse du potentiel de contraction du cœur, qui s'en trouve soulagé, et un relâchement des artères propice à une diminution de la tension. Dernière précision : les anticalciques n'ont pas d'action sur les muscles striés du squelette. Ils agissent par contre sur tous les muscles lisses, ceux des intestins et de l'utérus notamment. La femme enceinte doit donc s'en abstenir.

Avec autant de qualités, il ne fait pas de doute que les anticalciques seront bientôt les agents de choix du traitement de l'hypertension.

Pierre ROSSION ■