

Babel

The Language Magazine

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Chineasy

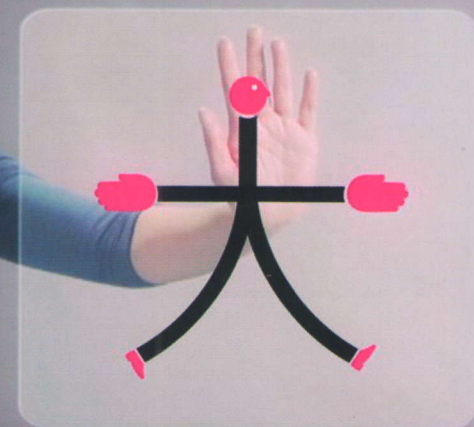
A first step in understanding Chinese

Borrowed words

The long echo of multilingual
medieval England

Ha! Gayyyy!

A brief etymology of the word gay



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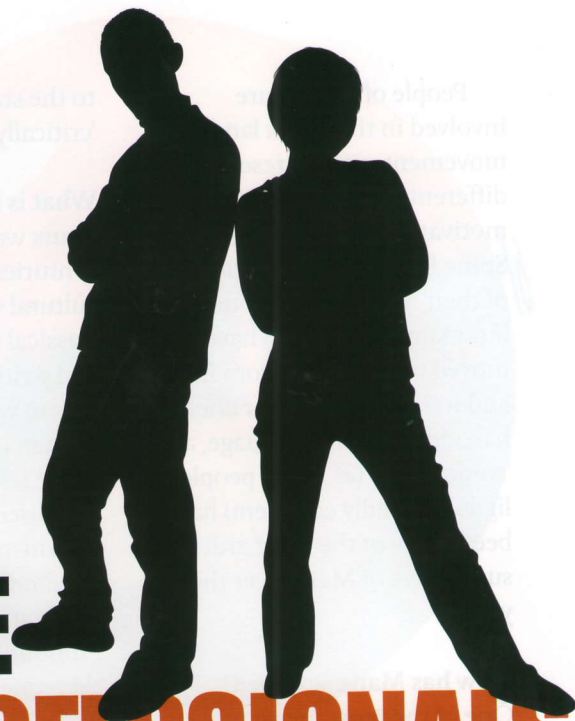
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Anna Chesnokova

Interpreter



MEET THE PROFESSIONALS

Anna Chesnokova is Director of the Ukraine-Europe Linguistic Centre and Professor of Linguistics at Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University, Ukraine.

Q. What kind of work does the Ukraine-Europe Linguistic Centre do?

We provide translation, interpretation and logistic services as well as any kind of language assistance one may need in Ukraine. Our clients include governmental organisations (both local and international), financial and commercial institutions alongside a wide range of small- and large-scale businesses, ranging from Royal Dutch Shell to the Discovery Channel.

Q. How did you get into the business?

My friends have known that I 'do foreign languages', so they would ask me for help in finding an interpreter or translator. I did it – for years – but then decided that the assistance should be structured, organized and professional. That's when

the Ukraine-Europe Linguistic Centre was born.

What is the difference between consecutive and simultaneous interpreting?

Consecutive interpreting involves pauses between an interpreter hearing the source language phrase and interpreting it into the target language. This type of interpretation is widely used at various international negotiations, exhibitions, excursions and other similar events.

By contrast, simultaneous (or conference) interpretation is regarded a top-class skill performed with the help of special equipment. In this case, the interpreter speaks almost at the same time as the speaker with a delay of just several seconds. Conference interpreters work in pairs or in groups and take turns, working

for 15-20 minutes at a time. Simultaneous interpretation is normally used at events with a considerable number of participants, for example at conferences, congresses, forums, etc. – not to mention sessions of UN or other international bodies. Another example of simultaneous interpretation that Ukraine-Europe has done is live interpretation of daily Bloomberg TV news to be broadcast in Ukraine with just 15 minutes delay from the UK.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of simultaneous interpreting?

Simultaneous interpretation has a number of clear advantages. The speaker is not interrupted, which allows him or her to hold the audience's attention and feel the reaction of listeners. As compared to the usage of consecutive interpretation,



Anna Chesnokova

the event length is reduced considerably. Additionally, the interpretation can be performed into several languages at the same time, which is crucial for international events. For instance, UN sessions are run simultaneously in six official languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. And did you know that UN interpreters have to know at least two more official UN languages in addition to their native one?

On the other hand, the cost of simultaneous interpretation, compared with consecutive interpretation, is significantly higher, and there is a need to hire 2-3 interpreters per language pair. In addition, because a conference interpreter works under specific time-limit conditions, the loss of information is higher, and the average scope of information rendered is usually about 60%.

What specialist equipment do you use for simultaneous interpreting?

We offer simultaneous interpretation performed with the help of professional infrared equipment. The standard set includes multi-channel receivers, headsets, interpretation booth, 2-, 3-, 6-channel interpreters' desks and interpreters' headsets (headphones and microphones). The sound system, the audio mixing desk and the microphones are customised to fit the conference hall area and the layout as well as the number of participants. The sound equipment includes table top units, radio microphones, lapel microphones, conference systems, sound amplifiers, audio mixing desks and speakers.

What are the particular challenges involved in doing simultaneous interpreting?

The average age of a European Commission interpreter is as high as fifty-eight, which means that the greatest challenge is growing a young generation of simultaneous interpreters. One issue many budding interpreters overlook is proper knowledge of their native tongue. Many of them tend to focus on mastering a foreign language, which is certainly a must, but forget to train their native one, expanding their vocabulary, learning the nuances of semantics, etc. This is crucial as the general international standard is that an interpreter translates into their mother tongue. That said, real-life situations can be pretty different, and many interpreters work both ways.

What is involved in training people to be interpreters?

Being an interpreter is a combination of personal qualities (for example, reaction speed or nervous system stability), high-quality training and, of course, experience. Not everybody realises that, because of physiological pressures, the job is listed among the most stressful ones – together with a brain surgeon and an air traffic controller. This means that being a conference interpreter should be a conscious choice.

While we don't claim to offer a substitute for full-scale university education, Ukraine-Europe offers a simultaneous interpretation training course for those who already have a good command of English; who know the basics of the translator's profession, but lack specific acquirements of the trade. The course has been designed by Professor

Guennadi Miram, a professional interpreter and author of numerous books on translation theory and techniques. It covers a variety of topics, including linguistic aspects of simultaneous interpretation, its psychophysiology, phonetics in simultaneous interpretation, and specific features of simultaneous interpretation at technical, scientific and political conferences and seminars, press-conferences, etc.

We also focus on ethical issues. What do you do if your point of view is dramatically opposite to what the speaker is saying? What does the interpreter do about jokes or curse words? These and many other issues need explanation.

What kind of a market is there for the services you provide?

Ukraine today is in the process of building solid relations with, or even becoming a member of various international organizations, like the EU. International businesses have begun to see Ukraine as a stable and reliable partner. Apart from political implications, this factor has opened additional market niches for translators and interpreters, and the need will only grow despite continuous promises by IT companies to finally launch a device that will substitute a human interpreter. I don't want to sound sceptical, but the realistic chances of our becoming unemployed within at least fifty years are really low! ¶

Find out more

Online

Find out more about the work of Ukraine-Europe Linguistic Centre at <http://ukr-europe.com/en/>.