DISTANCE EDUCATION

IN TRANSLATOR AND INTERPRETER TRAINING

Methodological lessons during the Covid-19 pandemic

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Introduction

We can all agree that the spring of 2020 was an unprecedented time throughout the world. A period that thoroughly tested mankind's adaptability. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, stringent restrictive measures were introduced in many countries, including work-from-home and the transition to distance education in primary, secondary and tertiary education. The technology needed for work-from-home and for distance learning, together with new information and communication tools had already been available, but in both cases there was a relatively strong reluctance to use them.This reluctance stemmed from the fear of the new, the unknown and of leaving the protection of our comfort zone. However, in mid-March 2020 we had no choice but to change our working, learning and teaching habits overnight. I think we've learned an incredible amount in a short time both about and from ourselves.

In some respects, the Department of Translating and Interpreting at Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE), Budapest, found itself in a fortunate situation in this special period as we have been conducting two semester courses in distance education since 2016. In these courses, we train translators, language reviewers and terminologists. Before starting the training, we had carried out serious preparatory work: we created the structure of the training, its methodology, its digital presentation, and held teacher training sessions. We also tried to prepare our newly recruited students for the specificities of the distance learning mode. For this, we asked for feedback from the participants of the first courses and modified the programme accordingly.

Furthermore, our department always adapts its training portfolio and content to current market needs. A key feature of the language industry and the market for language mediation is its continuous and rapid response to technological development. Therefore, it is part of the professional everyday life of translators, audiovisual translators, reviewers and terminologists to manage translation assistance tools, software, databases, and participate in online projects. Even before the spring of 2020, the interpreters sometimes worked in digital booths with tablets and smart pens, and remote interpreting was spreading as well. This also means that our courses include topics such as computer and language technology, language engineering, or remote interpreting.

In the academic year 2019–2020, our students in distance learning were fortunate that the pandemic situation did not affect their studies in any way. They and their instructors were scheduled to meet in person only at the entrance exams and final examinations, or during the facultative personal consultations during the semester. This cannot be said in the case of our students enrolled in full-time education, since when they started the term they did not know they would finish it in

distance education mode, including their final exam. Nevertheless, I think that we managed to cope well with the situation that had radically changed our lives overnight for a few months. I think this success is primarily due to the cooperation, communication and openness that characterises the community of the department – be it a relationship between student-student, teacher-teacher, teacher-student or administrative staff.

The present volume contains case studies or if you like, descriptions of the transition from presential to distance education, the experience of students and teachers. They include translation, guided translation project work, film subtitling, interpreter training, final examinations and doctoral defense in distance mode. What they all have in common is that the authors bring us very close to the dilemmas of distance education and examination, possible solutions, as well as pedagogical methods and processes that, I am sure, have affected not only us during this special period but many others as well. The volume shows a very high degree of institutional and educational creativity, and a positive, problem-oriented attitude. Here I would like to emphasise the phrase *institutional*, as our department has nearly fifty teachers, who have all made similar efforts to provide our students with the usual high-quality training during distance education, and ensure that the transition takes place as smoothly as possible. The infrastructural framework of this training was developed with the support of the university, faculty and department management.

Ildikó Horváth

Translation seminars in hybrid educational environments

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Abstract: Distance learning introduced as a result of the epidemiological emergency created a new situation for all participants of the education process at all levels. For both university lecturers and students, a quick and smooth transition was the primary goal. Several courses, programs offered by universities and adult training institutions have already been available for years in the form of d-learning, e-learning or m-learning, hence the experience gained earlier helped instructor decisions in this unexpected situation. Having my own experiences in the d-learning courses of translator training, I continued offering translation technique seminars in a hybrid educational environment. The present study aims to present and discuss the observations made during d-learning in the pandemic situation, with particular attention to the practice of hybrid education.

Keywords: distance learning, digital learning (d-learning), translation training, translation technique, hybrid education

1. Introduction

The classroom was filling up with students. Everyone was talking at the same time, the norm before class. Someone came up to me and inquired about a translation problem. The place was bustling as usual. Then I turned to my students and asked the same question I had always asked, namely how they felt on that beautiful spring day. We were talking in French, our common language for work. I asked each member an individual question, which was the signal to focus their attention on class. With this, the seminar based on interactions between lecturer and student, student and student started.

No one had the faintest idea that it was the last occasion in that term. The spread of the new coronavirus forced Eötvös Loránd University as a whole to shift to absence learning beginning from March 23, 2020.

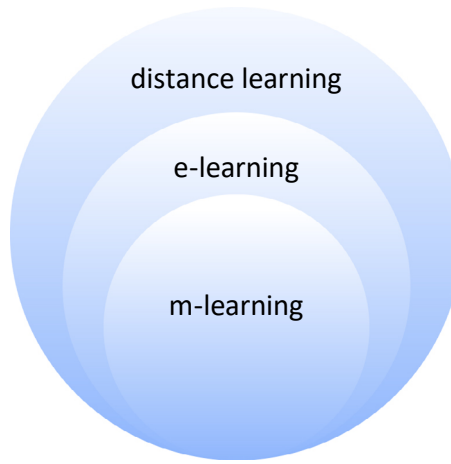
2. Distance learning versus absence learning

Before detailing the experiences of the exceptional situation, I consider it important to define some technical expressions. Some courses have been available for students for ages at universities and in adult education in the form of distance learning (*d-learning*) and *e-learning* on all levels, including undergraduate, graduate, or postgraduate studies, vocational education or reeducation. According to its traditional definition, distance learning is a special way of education where the huge distance between the lecturer and the student makes it impossible for them to be present at the same time during the educational process. Distance learning can combine or exclusively use traditional correspondence, e-mails, one or two-way video and satellite calls, as well as the tools of information and communication technology (Felvégi 2005).

Every distance or mobile learning process, where the tools of information and communication technology play a significant role, is called virtual or e-learning (Seresi 2016). E-learning has the advantage of interactivity compared to rigid, web-based learning.

Using the internet and mobile phones (smart phones) to facilitate the learning process has led to the development of a relatively new method called m-learning (*mobile-learning*) (Muhi et al. 2015). This newest form of distance learning and e-learning enables the individual to study without the restrictions of a fixed cable or network system, regardless of place and time. Its tools involve a laptop, a notebook, a tablet PC, PDA and a mobile phone.

Figure 1.
M-learning, the new form of e-learning (Georgiev et al. 2004)



The educational institutions shifted their operation to distance learning during the emergency. The activities related to education were regulated by the Committee of

Coordinating Epidemiological Operations (CCEO) at Eötvös Loránd University. The CCEO set the principles of distance learning as follows:

a) lectures cannot be held by live broadcasting (*streaming*) but recorded video materials can be shared with students;
b) seminars can be conducted at the scheduled times based on the curriculum;
c) course compliance should be guaranteed for those who face technological difficulties;
d) considering the above written, the method and tools of absence learning are optional, however, the University provides methodological assistance when using Canvas, Moodle, Neptun Meet Street and Microsoft Teams (ELTE 3/2020).

It can be stated that while distance learning, e-learning and m-learning are categories that define the educational environment, absence learning has been applied by social necessity, and it is a framework that is restricted to a specific time period to provide a background for education.

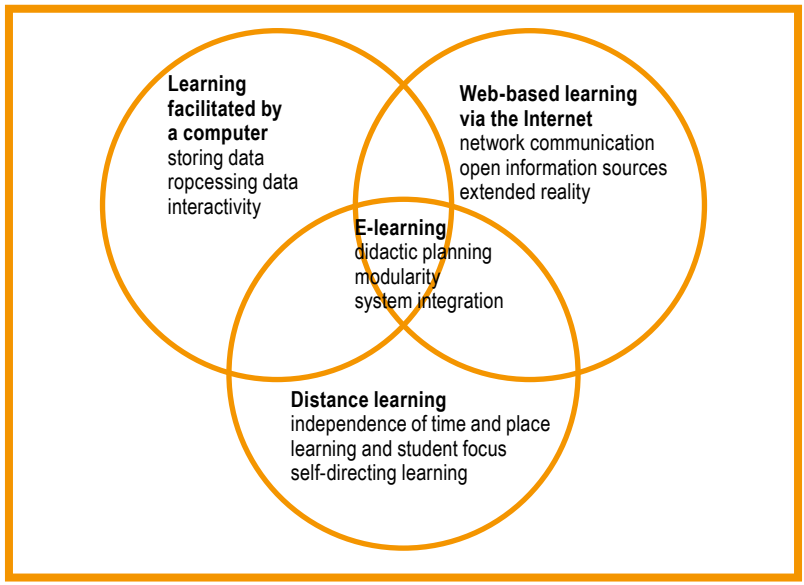
In my opinion, the absence learning introduced within only a few days in the spring of 2020 can be considered, in some aspects, rather as blended learning. According to Dobos' (2011) definition, blended learning is the simultaneous use of e-learning and the traditional educational system.

3. E-learning

Reviewing the partially overlapping definitions of e-learning, Komenczi (2014) suggests a system based and integrative approach. The developments, programs and course materials falling under the heading of e-learning are all forms of managing, directing and facilitating learning that draw on three, definable sources: learning facilitated by a computer, internet based learning and distance learning.

During learning facilitated by a computer, relevant information for the learner can be accessed and recorded without limits. Several operations can be executed with the data aided by computer algorithms, and this ability to process information provides the possibility for the learner to use the system in an interactive way. On the one hand, hypertext makes it possible to reach additional contents and information. On the other hand, e-learning plays an important part in the creation of learning units. A multimedia computer includes all those presentation techniques that featured the earlier audio-visual tools. Education can be made more exciting by the computer simulation of different processes and phenomena. Virtual reality seems very promising in the electronic learning environment, though it has not yet been widely adopted.

Figure 2.
The components of e-learning (Komenczi 2014)



Web-based learning, as an extension of or an alternative to face-to-face communication, provides simultaneous (chat, forums, chat programs, video conference applications) and asynchronous (e-mail, voice mail) communicational possibilities. These act as a basis for interaction and exchanging information between distant partners (students among themselves or between students and lecturer/mentor/tutor). The open information sources make it easier to access other databases and documents. Apart from having an insight into the surrounding world, the students can also have an impact on things with the help of extended reality (distant presence through the internet), using a completely new way of acquiring knowledge.

Learning can take place regardless of time and place during distance learning. Learning- and student-centered education replaces the former teacher and student relationship. The importance of information sources that facilitate learning has been increasing in these circumstances. The distance learning materials include the learning methods and the instructions necessary for acquisition, moreover, they suggest learning strategies and ensure motivation. To achieve an effective outcome in the learning process, one cannot disregard the fact that the distant learner should possess the abilities essential for independent learning.

The didactic planning of e-learning aims at combining the learning material, the learning program and the learning environment in order to reach an optimal result. Being the technological dimension of e-learning, modularity is an endeavour to fit the learning units into the software system that manages learning. The system approach requires the e-learning program to be put into the whole of the learning environment, with all its organizational and social implications (Komenczi 2014).

3.1. E-learning in the training of translators

The importance of e-learning in the training of translators is paramount. This learning environment implies those skills that are required by the professional translator in all kinds of translating cases. E-learning is the application of information and communication technologies within the framework of the training course. The training of translators aims to develop those skills of the professional working as a translator. Interaction during e-learning, unlike traditional training, takes place mainly between learner and text, learner and internet sources and learner and learner. The pedagogical objective has become rather to develop skills than to transfer those skills. This may be reached by the independent work and interactions of the students during the student-centered educational process.

The ideas that had been outlined earlier by Pym (2001) about the necessity of integrating e-learning into the training of translators have been implemented at several universities for three reasons. The first is that to translate on a professional level, it is indispensable to have a knowledge of the tools used in e-learning. The second is that e-learning provides an opportunity for *tandem-learning* at some training places, which allows students with highly different geographical and linguistic backgrounds to develop the linguistic competencies of each other by working on the same translation tasks. The third is the increasing need for such types of training, especially regarding part-time workers who, on the one hand, would like to improve their abilities and on the other hand, would like to obtain an accredited qualification. According to Dobos (2011), it is clearly to their advantage that the e-course materials can be transferred freely between various ends. In the field of training of translators where one can encounter a variety of languages, this possibility is particularly favourable. To add to the plus points, one can mention the interesting and motivating features of a virtual learning environment that can counteract the fear of monotony during translation work.

3.1.1. E-learning in the specialized courses at the Department of Translation and Interpreting

The first distance learning course was launched at the Department of Translation and Interpreting in 2016. The target audience of the course comes mainly from those who would like to pursue further studies while working and find it difficult to attend regular classes. Personal presence is required only at the entrance and final exam, as well as during each optional half-term tutorial. Everything else happens in the virtual space.

It is the MOOC (*Massive Online Open Course)*, one of the several systems facilitating learning, that provides the framework of the training. Being a way of learning made possible by the internet, it can be accessed by anyone. To assist MOOC, ELTE uses the learning management system of Canvas. The system allows

participants to access not only resources but learning activities and communicational channels on offer, as well.

As the course is entirely internet-based, it can be adjusted to the schedules of the participants flexibly. It features semi-synchronicity so the students are not supposed to be present at the same time with the lecturer. The interactions make sense even from a slightly asynchronous aspect, however, there are deadlines to form time limits for cooperation and accomplishment. Due to the many possibilities for interaction on the internet, the profile of these courses tends to move from content to activity. In other words, they do not only provide learning materials for participants but also inspire them to construct mutual knowledge.

The online course I conduct is available in the first term as *Specialized Translations in Economic Texts* (from language C to language A), and in the second term I teach *Specialized Translations in Legal Texts* (from language C to language A). Both courses use French and Hungarian and they consist of 12 modules. A module includes more course units containing links of bibliography, files of target language texts, documents involving instructions and suggestions for problem solving, videos and thematic forums. Because the first modules of the course are built up on each other sequentially, they can only be accessed within a given time, as well as a certain time frame is allocated for accomplishment. The rest of the modules can be accessed at the same time in order to foster independent learning, individual time management and continuous self-assessment. Thus, the pace of accomplishment is up to the students' ability to organize their own studies.

3.1.2. Pros and cons

When summarizing the findings of the online training of translators, one should not forget about the relatively new learning environment in which future translators have to cope with their intermediary role. Therefore, experiences and difficulties should be understood in this particular context.

It is inevitably an advantage of the online course that students are being placed at the centre of the learning process, turning in assignments continuously while taking advantage of all kinds of communication channels. In delayed (asynchronous) situations, the participants in the training may have access to more information than through the usual communication channels of the traditional educational process. It is an undisputed advantage of the asynchronous situation that the students can process the learning material on the basis of their individual schedules. However, it can only be advantageous for those who possess the necessary (metacognitive) skills to use the information and communication tools and are able to study on their own. The others, especially at the beginning, suffer a great amount of stress that is further increased by the structure of the first phase of the training. The fact that the process lacks physical attendance makes it difficult for the learners to admit failure, ask for help and give a hand to others.

Working in an environment selected by themselves, those participating in the educational process may experience further benefits, with their attitudes being positively influenced and thereby being motivated to work. In the meantime, keeping contact through e-mail and chat-forums requires an amount of time from both the lecturers and the students. As to the forums, their activity level often fluctuates, which can be corrected by moderating those groups that examine a certain aspect of a topic. Adding assessment can particularly improve matters.

Lecturers face a challenge when creating the structure of the course, filling up the modules with content, recording the texts and keeping contact with the students on a regular basis. It is common knowledge that the learning material of e-learning courses is put together by a group of experts in the business sphere. The learning material should not only convey knowledge but teaching and learning methods as well. Thus, the teacher does not teach in this environment, but rather supports and assists the students while giving inspiration, transferring the learning material, encouraging self-assessment and evaluating with the help of several channels (video conference, chat room, e-mail). It is certain that teachers will need to adapt to these changes in teaching methodology.

Apart from the possibility to acquire knowledge, continuous feedback and ongoing motivation should also be ensured for students (Lengyel 2007). To keep students' motivation ongoing, or to revitalize it, there are numerous tools available for the lecturer in a synchronous educational situation. To measure success, the lecturer can rely on a lot of direct information. However, the decrease in motivation can only be measured afterwards and indirectly in an asynchronous situation. According to my observations, the intensity of turning in assignments drops in that phase of the training when the students have to organize the work on their own, as the weekly modules do not force them to keep to regularity. As a result, most of the assignments are handed in at the weekend and there are a growing number of mistakes in the materials.

As a summary, one can state that the roles and tasks have changed and therefore, there is a necessity for an innovative approach from all the participants of the online training.

3.2 Blended learning during the time of absence learning

Having been stuck in the middle of the process at any level of education, all teachers had the question in mind of how to proceed with the work as smoothly as possible.

As ordered by the management of the university, the seminars could be held only in the scheduled times of the curriculum. Though the ways and tools of education became a matter of free choice, the university could provide technical and methodological assistance only for some particular platforms. With regard to the students, additional programs were not suggested to be used. Based on these antecedents, it was obvious that the best way to proceed with the seminars in translation

techniques was to apply blended learning, a combination of seminar attendance and the learning environment and materials of distance learning. The features of blended learning exceed the qualities of a classroom, since they involve elements that are both formal and informal, technology-based and people-centered, individual and social, controlled and discovery-oriented (Forgó et al. 2004).

From among the possible options, Zoom was chosen by our department as the tool for digital cooperation and video conferences. Zoom is a cloud-based communication platform, a webinar software that allows participants to join a discussion or even share the experience of a small conference. It operates through a browser or it can be downloaded onto a computer, a mobile phone or a tablet. To use it properly, broadband is required (even a 1MB down/ uploading speed is suitable for the video), a tool with a camera (computer, smart phone), and a headset (even the simplest version will do). However, it does not hinder operation if only a built-in microphone is available in the computer, and there is no camera at all. Moreover, one can join a meeting by calling a Hungarian telephone number on the phone.

The free version of Zoom can be downloaded from a browser (Google Chrome, Firefox), though the version that suits the requirements of higher education is available for a subscription. This latter version enables students to gather and talk in separate chat rooms, share different documents simultaneously or watch recorded videos later.

The lecturer invites the students to each seminar by sending a link or a meeting ID and a password which guides them directly to the waiting room of the seminar. The participants can see and hear each other as any of their screens can be shared by clicking the *share screen* button. When students would like to put a question to the lecturer, they click on *chat* and write their questions down. The microphone can be muted and unmuted, and by clicking *leave* one may choose to quit the seminar at any time.

3.2.1. Seminars in translation techniques with webinar software

I consider it a fortunate circumstance against the unfortunate background that all the requirements, be they the necessary tools or the readiness of the students, were met for holding the Zoom seminars. It is not an irrelevant fact that each participant could ensure an undisturbed environment for the 90-minute-long sessions. The workflow of the seminars proceeded as usual. We were debating some questions of the use of Hungarian with the help of the shared documents. We were extending our cultural understanding and vocabulary with the photos downloaded from the internet. The French articles that had been read together were being processed through a preparation phase prior to translation. The part of the animated movie we had seen earlier was being subtitled in group work and we were thinking about translation problems. The accomplished translations met the deadline and the subsequent corrections were returned. We followed our routine to discuss the appropriateness of

translating decisions in a live chat. Besides exchanging information, it was also our usual aim to examine practice, reflect on ideas and search for new solutions.

In my opinion, Dobos's (2011) statement regarding training is valid for seminars, even if it is smaller in size. During training, it is the individual, experimental learning that comes into focus in which interpersonal space gains significant importance. Those who led or participated in a good training are familiar with the inner group dynamics that start working and have experienced its various incremental effects. While these effects can be felt after a successful traditional seminar, I believe that Zoom seminars have the potential to reach the same result as well. The enthusiasm raised during a certain seminar motivated the students to present their favourite pieces of art in their second foreign language, although, according to the experience of previous years, they had tried to avoid loud communication in language C where possible.

Smith and Stacey (2003) state that group interaction and the feedback received from the teacher and the participants provide the necessary context and stimulus for the student to construct new knowledge. This makes the effectiveness of online learning questionable in the eyes of many. Nevertheless, the seminars in a Zoom environment are closer to traditional than to online education in this respect.

Noted as a new experience, the students communicated more freely than ever before in that well-known medium where the video chat apps (FaceTime, Viber, Whatsapp, Messenger) are part of their daily life. According to research, the participants of online training feel that communication is more democratic because everyone is given an equal chance and no one can play a dominant role in the discussion (Naidu 2003).

The seminars revealed aspects of the participants' personality that usually remain unseen within the framework of traditional education. During the seminars we all let the others have a look at our private lives. The quarantine situation allowed space for expressing feelings and apparently, the students had a stronger motive for contacting each other.

Apart from the positive experiences, we all had to face a fundamental difficulty during the seminars. Maintaining concentration through the 90-minute-long meetings required constant attention on the part of both the lecturer and the students. We kept staring at the screens constantly and could only have a few seconds' break. The noises in the background, the disturbing light and shadow effects, the crackling of the microphones or the internet connection clogging up – these all led to loss of attention sooner than in traditional seminars. But the Zoom environment provided more possibilities for the students to resolve the problems. They could switch off their microphones or/and cameras for a short period of time, have a sip of their drinks or could change place in their rooms.

On the whole, it can be said that the seminars held in the Zoom environment exceeded the potential of the traditional training, giving new impetus to the training process, though they required a higher level of concentration from the participants and as such, they were much more exhausting.

4. Closing thought

The screen is filling up with faces. We are chatting for a few minutes before class, as usual. The students are not speaking at the same time but there is a chance for everyone to say a couple of words. I can see one of my students'cat stretching lazily and jumping off the desk. Bence has forgotten to switch on his microphone again, so I remind him to do so. Then, as always, I turn to my students and ask how they are feeling on this beautiful, spring day. We are talking in French, our common language for work. I am asking each member an individual question, which is the signal to focus their attention on class. With this, the seminar based on interactions between lecturer and student, student and student starts. Slightly differently but anyway, still in the same way as usual…

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Virtual classroom in the teaching of translation

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Abstract: As a result of changing social needs and the development of information technology, distance learning, digital education and e-learning have become the new methodological paradigm in pedagogy. As the new Covid-19 pandemic hit the world and distance learning was introduced at all levels of education, this development has gained even greater momentum, thus it has become possible to make general observations regarding e-learning methodologies. The present paper discusses the results of a questionnaire survey conducted during the time of distance education introduced at Eötvös Loránd University due to the pandemic situation, with the participation of the MA students of the Department of Translation and Interpreting. The aim of the survey was to shed light on the efficiency of the Canvas learning management system (LMS) functioning as a virtual classroom, with special emphasis on the student-student and teacher-student "classroom" interactions. The results show that the teacher as facilitator, moderator and mentor plays a key role in the success of online interactions in the e-learning environment. Furthermore, based on the results, it seems that it would be worthwhile incorporating LMS functions into traditional educational settings, even if the advantages of the face-to-face traditional classroom exceed those of e-learning.

Keywords: distance learning, e-learning, learning management system (LMS), virtual classroom, interaction

1. Introduction

In recent decades, as a result of changing social needs, greater mobility and the development of information technology, an increasing emphasis has been placed on renewing educational methods and promoting lifelong learning. Distance learning, digital education and e-learning have become a new methodological paradigm in pedagogy, and as a result, more and more institutions offer online courses in distance learning settings, although generally with a small number of participants and not as a common form of teaching, primarily in the areas of adult education and university courses. Translator and interpreter training is no exception (Pym 2001; Pym et al. 2003), in particular since the modern skill sets (Pym 2013) and digital tools of professional translators are largely identical with the learning skills

and instruments necessary for e-learning (Pym 2002). Furthermore, remote interpreting is rapidly gaining ground (Seresi 2016), and the e-learning environment is undoubtedly similar to the working conditions of freelance translators. Therefore, it seems logical that through e-learning students can prepare for the special conditions and requirements of the modern-day translation industry.

Unfortunately, however, little empirical research has as yet been available in Hungary regarding the efficacy of the e-learning environment, particularly of courses taught in learning management systems (LMS) (e.g., Abonyi-Tóth and Tóth-Mózer 2017), most of the literature on the subject is focused on the experiences and practices of foreign educational settings (e.g., Dobos 2001; Felvégi 2005). This lack of research is probably due to the novelty of the paradigm and to its dynamic development – e-learning up until now has not been a widespread educational environment and the number of participants has generally been too low to allow for in-depth and extensive research. Furthermore, shared experiences and practices lead to a constant change in pedagogical methods and technology, thus it has been difficult to observe and measure features of the approaches applied in e-learning. Papers on translation pedagogy are also largely aimed at presenting the conclusions of individual online courses (Pym et al. 2003), generally relying on intuitive ideas, impressions, experiences, as well as focusing more on the technological and non-pedagogical characteristics of e-learning. However, recently more academic research has been done in the general context of e-learning, as well as translator and interpreter training in distance education (e.g., Tartsayné Németh 2012; Pankász 2016; Seresi 2016; Berecz 2019).

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, distance education was introduced out of necessity all across the country in Hungary – and this unexpected situation has given further impetus to the digital methodological development of the educational system, which in turn has enabled deeper and more extensive observations of the e-learning environment, with particular emphasis on the pedagogical aspects of traditional face-to-face teaching methods and distance education. The present paper discusses the results of a questionnaire survey conducted during the time of distance education introduced at Eötvös Loránd University due to the pandemic situation, with the participation of the MA students of the Department of Translation and Interpreting. The aim of the survey was to explore the effectiveness of the Canvas learning management system, functioning as a virtual classroom, with special regard to the interaction of students among themselves and with the teacher. Before giving a detailed description of the results, I will briefly review the general features of e-learning, the advantages and disadvantages of its application in translation training, then discuss how translation classes were implemented in the e-learning framework during the first wave of Covid-19.

2. E-learning and translator training

Modern education places particular emphasis on the development of innovative teaching methods, for which information and communication technology is a key element. Instead of conventional teacher-centred frontal education, the new pedagogical approach favours learner-centred, collaborative, activity-oriented methods that build on student's independent work and learning autonomy. E-learning (or e-education) also serves the new educational paradigm, but its definition is far from clear, as distance education, web-based teaching, digital learning, and computer-based education are often synonymous with e-learning in the literature on teaching methodology (see Komenczi 2014), as well as in the media, especially in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, these modes of education are in fact overlapping categories and e-learning combines their different characteristics.

According to the general definition of e-learning, this category includes all forms of education where electronic devices such as digital boards, e-books, video recordings, audio recordings, applications and different internet platforms are used for the presentation and processing of the teaching materials, as well as for communication between the participants. In this sense, digital education, computer-based learning, and online teaching are indeed partly synonyms, or rather converging concepts that share some of their characteristics, and where digital education and not e-learning is the broadest, encompassing category:

Digital education → Computer-based education → online education → *e-learning* (?)

However, it remains unclear how online education differs exactly from e-learning, if there are any differences at all. Pym (2002: 3) defines e-learning as the use of electronic tools in training programs, combining different aspects of open courses and distance learning (ODL), thus placing e-learning primarily in the context of distance education. Seresi (2016: 79) provides a similar definition, according to which virtual or e-learning involves remote learning activities where information and communication technologies play a crucial role, adding that virtual learning can be achieved through both synchronous and asynchronous methods.

Komenczi (2014) examines the various definitions of e-learning, then concludes that e-learning combines certain features of computer-assisted learning, web-based teaching, and distance education, with the specific features of didactic planning, optimal design of curriculum and learning environment, modularity characterised by the use of learning management tools, as well as system integration. Regarding the specific characteristics of e-learning, Komenczi's definition is consistent with an earlier definition of Forgó (2005: 14), who describes e-learning as a form of education available on a web-based computer network which organises the learning process using effective, optimal knowledge transfer methods, as well as providing an interactive teaching software for the presentation of teaching materials, learning resources, teacher-learner communication within a single platform.

Based on the above definitions, e-learning can thus be described as an innovative pedagogical approach which includes new modes of the teaching and learning process through digital information and communication technologies (ICT). It can be used in distance education or hybrid (blended) learning settings, in combination with traditional face-to-face lessons, and can be applied using both synchronous and asynchronous teaching methods. Its specific features are optimal didactic planning, system integration, as well as the presentation of the teaching materials, the learning environment, and the communication between participants in a uniform, web-based educational framework, i.e. learning management system (LMS).

2.1. E-learning in translator training: advantages and disadvantages

Given the nature and definition of e-learning, it offers several benefits to participants in the learning process, some even supersede those of traditional face-to-face educational settings. The integration of e-learning pedagogical methods into translator training can be beneficial in several respects, especially as there is an increasing demand for distance learning courses by translation students (Pym 2002: 4). In Hungary, although several BA philology courses offer specialisation in translation skills, translator and interpreter training courses are typically available at postgraduate level. Therefore, in a lot of cases, it is mainly graduates wishing to continue their studies alongside jobs and families who apply for these courses. It is also not uncommon that students decide to participate in university postgraduate programs from abroad. The primary advantage of e-learning in distance learning is flexibility, as the learning process takes place in the extended reality of virtual space, characterised by temporal and spatial independence (Bereczki et al. 2020).

In fact, this freedom creates the basis for the activity-oriented, discovery-based work, independence, and autonomy of the learner, behind which the instructor is no longer regarded as the primary source of knowledge, but rather as the manager, facilitator and mentor of the learning process (Tartsayné Németh 2012). Therefore, greater emphasis is placed on the responsibility and self-assessment of the student, the development and facilitation of which is particularly needed in translator training (Robinson et al. 2006). The pedagogical methods of e-learning are suitable for showing translator students how to evaluate their translated texts independently, based on the feedback received, and how to further develop their knowledge and professional skills, as they should do in their later careers.

In the current digital age, the tools and methods of the e-learning environment can be particularly motivating for learners. During the training, participants can also familiarise themselves with new applications and explore how existing tools are used to facilitate their learning process. As a result of the application of computer tools, the curriculum can be thoroughly planned and documented, thus the course is transparent and can be easily traced back. In this way, all information can be recorded, all data is accessible and can be used practically unlimitedly (Bereczki et al. 2020: 10). This is one of the reasons why it may be worthwhile to integrate

e-learning into traditional education, as a complement to face-to-face lessons to increase the general quality and efficiency of education.

A further incentive to use e-learning methods is that the modern competences and digital tools of professional translators (Pym 2013), as well as the learning skills and appliances required for e-learning, are virtually the same in several respects (Pym 2002). Translator training may therefore profit from exploiting the potential of the pedagogical methods and computer-based tools of e-learning, as this educational environment can support the activity-based and process-driven development of translation competence (Massey 2005). Furthermore, the e-learning environment is undoubtedly similar to the actual working conditions of professional freelance translators, where communication with clients, exchange of texts – essentially the translation process itself –, feedback, conflict resolution, and even interaction with the translation community are largely carried out in the virtual space of the internet. In this way, as a result of learning in an authentic working environment, students can prepare for the conditions and requirements of the modern translation industry, not only by developing their translation production and instrumental skills, but also their professional service provision competences (Pym 2002: 4; Massey 2005).

E-learning, again due to its specific features, undeniably entails not only advantages but also disadvantages, and these disadvantages often result from the very advantages described above. One of the most critical limitations of e-learning is the lack of familiarity with digital devices on the part of learners and teachers alike (Bereczki et al. 2020: 10; Pym 2002), since digital incompetence, technological malfunctions or even the lack of digital devices can sabotage the entire learning process. Furthermore, when teaching is based on the use of multiple digital platforms and different electronic devices, participants may not be able to hold the strands together or carry out their tasks, thus losing control of their work.

According to general observations, the design and structure of the curriculum, teaching materials, and the organisation of the autonomous learning process seem to require significant time and energy investment from both teachers and students (Pym 2002; Pym et al. 2003), despite the flexibility of the e-learning environment. Furthermore, as it has already been pointed out, in e-learning the emphasis is shifted from teacher-centred approaches to the independent work and autonomy of students – this very fact, however, may contribute to e-learning becoming overly unilateral and monotonous. In the online virtual space, it may also be difficult to establish interaction between the participants of the learning process, and because of their isolation, students may feel abandoned and on their own, thus the resulting uncertainty may lead to reduced motivation (Massey 2005).

Overcoming the disadvantages of the e-learning environment is undoubtedly necessary to ensure the efficiency of e-education and to achieve the pedagogical goals. This task is partly the responsibility of educational institutions and partly that of the teacher, the facilitator and manager of the learning process. Institutions should ensure the purchase of electronic devices and learning management systems

necessary for e-learning, making them available for both students and teachers, as well as providing support materials, guidebooks and training for the participants. It is the responsibility of the instructor to draw the attention of students to the functions of the info-communication tools used in the learning process, to provide explicit instructions (Bereczki et al. 2020), or in the event of a technical crisis, provide assistance and show flexibility.

It is also the responsibility of the teacher to develop and facilitate interactions between participants in the learning process, which is essential for collaborative learning, increasing student motivation and reducing isolation (Massey 2005). It is therefore necessary to design courses which can imitate traditional classroom work through interactive activities (Pym 2002), easing the unilaterality and possible monotony of e-learning. One of the conditions for interactivity is that the group progresses at roughly the same pace, which may seem to contradict the temporal flexibility of the e-learning environment generally using asynchronous methods. As a solution, Pym (2002) recommends *controlled* asynchrony, which still ensures learner autonomy, but at the same time specifies the tasks to be completed within a certain time frame, allowing group work and interaction between participants.

Some of the technical and methodological difficulties of e-learning can be overcome or reduced by using digital learning management systems (LMS). These systems provide for the storage, sharing and structured presentation of all teaching materials on a single platform. The content of the courses created and stored on the digital platform can be reused later, so that the burden of time and energy invested by the instructor may be reduced, the quality of courses can be improved, and the content regularly updated. Such frameworks also support the monitoring of student performance and development, as well as evaluation. Moreover, learning management systems provide a platform for the implementation of supplementary activities, and for the initiation of interaction among participants, ensuring the achievement of the pedagogical objectives of e-learning.

2.3. Distance education at the Department of Translation and Interpreting of ELTE

In March 2020, the new type of coronavirus, Covid-19 reached Hungary, and the authorities began to introduce defensive actions in order to prevent the spread of the disease. The Rector of Eötvös Loránd University ordered an emergency break for students on 12–13 March 2020, based on the government's provisions regarding the pandemic situation, then the spring break took place – earlier than originally planned – between 16 and 22 March 2020. According to the provision of the ELTE Epidemiological Operative Coordinating Body, from 23 March 2020, the university introduced distance education for the entire institution, the lecturers and the administrative staff had to prepare for the changed situation during the emergency and the spring break.

The university's Epidemiological Operative Coordinating Body imposed compulsory absence on all students, while the instructors were obliged to update their teaching materials and curricula to be made available to students by electronic means, in compliance with the institutional recommendations. On 23 March 2020, the university published interim regulations of training and examination, which were introduced temporarily due to the epidemic emergency, giving clear and fair guidance to university citizens. The interim regulations presented the general framework and agenda for distance education, as well as the rights and obligations of students and teachers. Regarding the methodology and the environment of distance education, the university gave the instructors freedom to choose between different synchronous and asynchronous methods: sharing pre-recorded video materials, organising live video sessions or using learning management systems. In addition, ELTE offered technical and methodological support for the implementation of classes in Canvas, Moodle, Neptun Meet Street and Microsoft Teams – all of which are reliable learning management systems. The Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology of the university also compiled methodological aids for their teachers (Bereczki et al. 2020), providing useful guidance for all university instructors on the specificities and challenges of distance education in general, as well as on the use of Canvas (Moodle, CooSpace) as a virtual classroom and on the use of various webinar applications.

Although at the time of the Covid-19 epidemic the main emphasis was on the compulsory abscence of students from the buildings of the educational institution, and the means and framework of digital education was not precisely defined, the previously optional e-learning environment became a social necessity overnight. In recent years, ELTE has placed special emphasis on the development of digital distance learning methods and content, as a new paradigm in pedagogy, encouraging teachers interested in the use of e-learning methods with grants, digital guidebooks and open courses.[1] The Department of Translation and Interpreting at ELTE enjoyed a great advantage during the transition to distance education, although there were still numerous challenges to overcome, as the department has been involved in the development of digital courses for distance education since 2016, and has been offering e-learning courses in specialised translation, terminology and revision, implemented in the Canvas learning management system. For this reason, a significant number of the trainers were already familiar with the e-learning environment, and there was a smooth transition of master-level interpreting classes (see Eszenyi 2021, Seresi 2021) and translation seminars (see also Kovalik-Deák 2021), using both new and already familiar frameworks.

[1] ELTE e-learning course development support https://www.elte.hu/elearning/kurzusfejlesztesi_tamogatas;
ELTE e-learning courses https://www.elte.hu/elearning/kepzesek;
ELTE e-learning guidebooks https://www.elte.hu/elearning/segedanyagok

2.4. Teaching translation in the virtual classroom

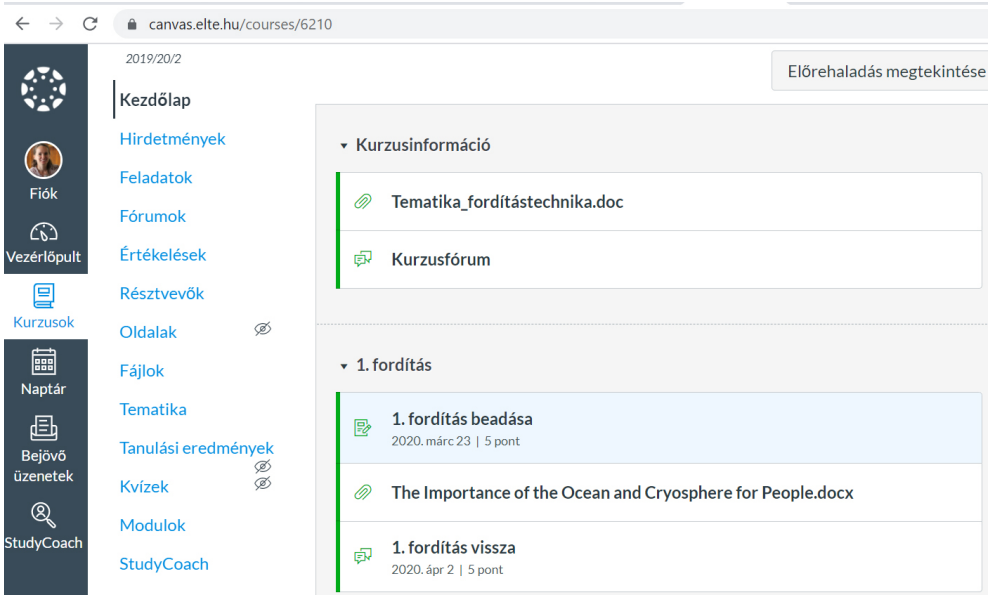
Following the enactment of distance education in ELTE, it seemed to be the obvious solution to continue the translation seminars – which had started off as traditional face-to-face classes – with the help of the Canvas education framework, in an e-learning environment, similarly to the department's distance learning courses. The university provides not only IT infrastructure for the application of Canvas, but also various support materials[2] and counselling to both faculty members and students. Moreover, it seemed expedient – and convenient in the emergency situation – to use already proven methods and tools. ELTE maintains two types of Canvas systems, one for designing and launching independent open courses, while the other – in a sort of hybrid educational environment – supports traditional formal classes by allowing teachers to create e-learning courses through the Neptun Unified Education System. After the introduction of distance education had been enacted at Eötvös Loránd university, all teachers had to do was select the Canvas e-learning framework in Neptun, and the registered students were automatically assigned to the e-learning course, provided with the necessary access to Canvas.

The Canvas learning management system provides a unified framework for storing and sharing materials and additional teaching contents, as well as structuring the learning process. Modules can be created on the course interface, combining individual pages, tasks, quizzes, uploaded files, forums, and external links within one unit, which specifically supports activity-oriented pedagogy. Within the module, these files and activities can be sorted with text headers, thus showing the structure of the curriculum, as shown in *Figure 1* below.

The modules can be set one by one to be made available for students from a specified date, hour, even minutes, up until then the content is blocked, and the students can only see it when the content becomes available. By setting a deadline for tasks, controlled asynchrony (Pym 2002) becomes possible, thus students can focus on the content of each module within a limited time frame, but not necessarily at the same time. However, publishing the modules in a chronological order is the decision of the instructor, who may also decide to upload the course content in advance, making the tasks available to students who can then proceed in the curriculum according to their individual needs and competences.

[2] Canvas User Manual https://www.elte.hu/dstore/document/4593/Canvas-kezikonyv.pdf

Figure 1
Learning modules in the Canvas framework



The Canvas learning management system functions as a "virtual classroom" (Bereczki et al. 2020), because it provides the possibility for interaction, for individual and collective communication between students and teachers. Interaction can take place on the Canvas interface in the form of messages, announcements, and forums. The messages allow for personal communication between the teacher and the students, while through announcements the instructor can share information of public interest to the whole group and give explicit instructions. Forums serve to provide a platform for interaction within the group and allow for "classroom" discourse, giving all participants the opportunity to comment and communicate with each other. The forum function of Canvas enables focused discussions, i.e., answers to the questions raised, as well as threaded comments, thus providing a platform for active discussion between participants. On this basis, it may be concluded that the Canvas framework, with its user-friendly, transparent and diverse functions, is able to take advantage of the above-mentioned positive features of the e-learning environment and to offset its drawbacks.

At the start of the emergency-induced distance education, I created the learning modules according to the twelve-week diligence period of the 2019/2020 spring semester, timing a separate module for each week of study. I uploaded the content of the course in advance to the Canvas interface and published the deadlines for the tasks. Faster moving students had the opportunity to work ahead, while receiving notifications of everything that happened in the modules, so they could re-enter the group work when necessary. Each module included a translation task and

one or two forum tasks. The forums were mostly used to prepare translations, but also included additional activities to break the monotony: terminological work, sight translation, discussion of theoretical questions, and sharing parallel texts. Ex post discussions of translations with students' contributions were also carried out in forums.

Participation in the Canvas discussions was included in the evaluation of students' course performance, similarly to classroom work in traditional presential classes. My own experience in distance learning shows that students tend to focus only on mandatory tasks, neglecting optional translation-related activities which are introduced for additional pedagogical purposes. The evaluation function of the Canvas platform enables the trainer to provide individual, personal feedback on the comments of the students – which is not shown in the active forum thread –, as well as to participate in the discussion with their own shared comments. Participation in the forums essentially seeks to make-up for the usual interaction in conventional classroom settings, so students can be expected to participate, but the success of the forum depends to a large extent on the teacher:

> Learning is not only possible at an individual level: the online space also allows for interaction. […] In the case of online courses, participants may be asked to manifest themselves, for example in forums, posts or respond to other entries. In these cases, we need to keep in mind the learning goals of the course: let us explore an understandable, clear, well-defined problem with the participants, give clear instructions. (Bereczki et al. 2020: 19)

The forums on the Canvas platform allow students to participate asynchronously and everyone in the course can see the comments of their peers on the subject raised. Furthermore, asynchrony and virtual space can even make the interaction easier for students who would normally prefer to remain passive in presential, face-to-face sessions. Therefore, participation in forums can be even more effective than conventional classes, especially since "voiced" and shared information can be retrieved at any time (Pym et al. 2003: 85). Finally, as an additional benefit, forums may prepare and encourage students to participate in professional forums later on in their career.

3. Research methodology

The introduction of distance education due to the Covid-19 outbreak in Hungary enabled a more in-depth study into the effectiveness of the virtual classroom in e-learning, with a special focus on the interaction of students in the "classroom" among themselves and with their instructor. The aim of the survey was to explore the experiences and opinions of the students regarding the Canvas forum function, whether they consider it a suitable means to carry out the tasks and activities nor-

mally an integral part of presential translation courses, as well as an acceptable platform to have professional discussions. The survey also aimed to shed light on how students assess the use of forum participation compared to presential and webinar classes. The details of the survey and the results are described below.

3.1. Participants of the survey

The survey was completed by first and second-year Master's students of the Department of Translation and Interpreting of ELTE, who started their courses with personal attendance in the spring semester of the 2019/2020 academic year, but were forced to switch to distance education in accordance with the provisions of the university. The participating students were, therefore, equally familiar with presential and distance education, so, based on their experience, they were able to formulate an opinion on the specificities and benefits of both forms of training. Furthermore, as the students had to complete all their spring semester courses in distance learning mode, and the provisions of the university's Epidemiological Operative Coordinating Body gave trainers considerable freedom in the use of different synchronous and asynchronous pedagogical methods, from simple e-mails to webinar sessions (Bereczki et al. 2020), it was possible to assess which distance learning pedagogical method is considered more effective in terms of actual learning, teacher feedback and student interaction.

Participants of the *General Translation Skills* (BA II and CA II) and *Legal Translation* (CA II and BA II) courses, a total of 74 students from five groups were asked to complete the questionnaire. In the end, 63 people participated in the survey, 57 (90.5 %) women and 6 men (9.5 %); incidentally, this figure reflects representatively the gender distribution of students participating in the translation and interpreter training courses of Eötvös Loránd University. 63.5 % of students (40) were in their first and 36.5 % (23) in their second year when completing the questionnaire. Therefore, although the majority of respondents had fewer opportunities to experience conventional classes offered by the department, they still had an appropriate basis for comparison, as they started their general translation skills course in presential learning settings in the autumn semester, and only switched to distance education in the spring semester due to the pandemic situation.

Although the survey specifically targeted students enrolled in specialised translation and general translation skills seminars, 12 respondents (19 %) – mostly first-year students about to choose their specialisation – said they would prefer to pursue interpreting as a career, while 51 (81 %) clearly favoured translation. This fact may be of interest for one reason when assessing the survey results: as discussed above, the typically asynchronous e-learning environment based on digital learning frameworks is particularly relevant and effective for the training translators, as it mimics the real-life professional practice of present-day translation industry where translators manage their own work autonomously, using digital tools, while respecting deadlines and client instructions. Interpreting, on the other hand,

is characterised by live communication, and synchronous pedagogical methods have become more common in interpreter training (see Eszenyi 2021, Seresi 2021). Thus, it can be assumed that the learning preferences of students who tend towards interpreting also tend towards live communication. To investigate whether the academic year of the students participating in the survey and thus their preference for one of the two modes of language mediation influenced their attitudes towards the forums, I conducted correlational analyses using the SPSS Statistics computer program.

3.2. Details of the questionnaire

I shared the corresponding link to the online questionnaire with the students via the Canvas framework. I incorporated the questionnaire into a separate module in such a way that completion did not count towards the end-of-semester evaluation, ensuring voluntary response. However, the participation rate was very high (85.1 %), and it can therefore be concluded that the students did have something to say about the pedagogical methods used in distance learning and were willing to share their experiences, thus contributing to the future effectiveness of e-learning. The questionnaire was filled in at the end of the semester, as the questions sought to explore the students' experiences throughout the semester. Completing the survey as an online questionnaire, independent of the Canvas platform, ensured the anonymity of the participants, and the questions themselves did not ask for any personal data which would allow respondent identification.

The questionnaire contained 16 questions, including multiple-choice, linear scale, and open-ended questions requiring explanation. The first part of the questionnaire (questions 1 to 3) concerned the students themselves, assessing their gender, year, and preferences regarding the mode of language mediation. After the general details, I asked questions about students' participation in the forum discussions (questions 4 to 6), followed by questions about the usefulness and effectiveness of the forums and how they are used in teaching translation skills (questions 7 to 10). This was followed by a comparison between the forum function of the virtual classroom and the work carried out in contact hours, and an exploration of preferences for synchronous (e.g. Zoom) and asynchronous (e.g. virtual classroom forum) modes of e-learning (questions 11 to 14). The last two questions summarised the participants' impressions and possible suggestions regarding the virtual classroom forum feature. The full questionnaire is presented in the Appendix at the end of the study.

3.3. Participants' responses

The student responses to the survey questions are presented and evaluated below, grouped by topic. The responses to the questions in the first part of the questionnaire, which relate to the gender, year and preference of the students for the mode

of language mediation, are summarised above in the introduction of the survey participants.

3.3.1. Participation in forums

The students who completed the questionnaire indicated that they always (46, 73 %) or mostly (17, 27 %) participated in the forums shared on Canvas for the translation tasks in each module. They admitted that they only failed to participate when they forgot about the deadline due to the accumulation of work to be done during distance learning, or about the forum itself, or when they felt that the question had already been answered by others and that they had no further useful input to add. Regarding missed deadlines, several people expressed their regret that Canvas had not informed them of the deadline or of the instructor's contribution to the question, so they missed the opportunity to share their thoughts.

When asked what motivated them to participate in the forums, only 18 (28.5 %) of the students said that they had participated mainly because of the mandatory nature of the task and the points to gain. The rest were motivated to participate by the opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas, especially as they felt that expressing their own opinions could lead to more informed translation decisions. A further motivation was that the forums provided an opportunity for communication with their peers, professional exchange and collaboration within the group. In this way, active participation in the virtual classroom may be viewed as equivalent to classroom work, and students recognised this:

> […] completing the semester consists not only of handing in the translations, but also of attending classes, and forums are intended to make up for this. Also, I found it very useful to exchange views with my peers, who had their own opinions about a problem, about what solution they would choose and why, and the more people contributed to a topic, the more useful it was.

Moreover, based on the answers, the time-limited participation in the forums provided students with a systematic framework and thus motivation in the distance learning environment, so that they did not sink into the monotony of the quarantine situation and isolated work.

3.3.2. Usefulness and effectiveness of forums

The next set of questions concerned the usefulness and effectiveness of the forums and the practicalities of their use in distance education (questions 7 to 10). I first asked the students whether they found the forums useful and then asked them whether they thought that the forums were an effective way of preparing for translation tasks and providing additional knowledge and information. I also asked whether they found participating in forums a waste of time or an unnecessary

exercise. For all three questions, they indicated their answers on a linear scale (1 to 5), where (5) was 'very' and (1) was 'not at all/completely'. The responses are summarised *in Table 1* below.

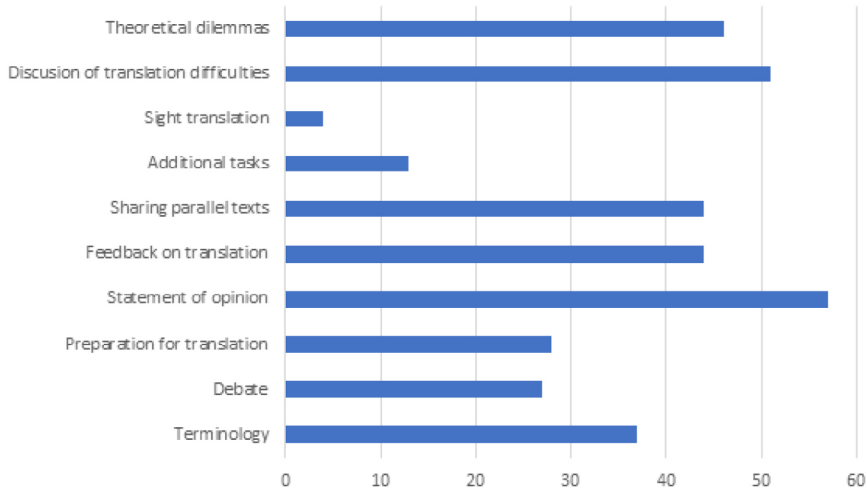
Table 1
Usefulness and effectiveness of forums

Questions	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
Forum usefulness	25 (39.7 %)	20 (31.7 %)	9 (14.3 %)	6 (9.5 %)	3 (4.8 %)
Forum efficiency	30 (47.6 %)	14 (22.2 %)	10 (15.9 %)	7 (11.1 %)	2 (3.2 %)
Forum waste of time	0 (0 %)	3 (4.8 %)	13 (20.6 %)	20 (31.7 %)	27 (42.9 %)

The majority of respondents were positive about the usefulness (45, 71.4 %) and effectiveness (44, 69.8 %) of Canvas forums to complement translation tasks in e-learning courses. A roughly equal proportion of respondents (9, 14.3 % and 10, 15.9 %) chose the middle of the scale, and just about the same proportion (9, 14.3 %), but fewer respondents expressed negative opinions about the usefulness and effectiveness of the forums. When asked specifically whether the forums were a waste of time, no one answered 'completely' and only a few (3, 4.8 %) gave a negative response, with the rest settling in the middle of the scale (13, 20.6 %) or not considering the forums to be a waste of time (47, 74.6 %). The responses therefore suggest that most students found participation in the forums useful and effective.

The next question aimed to find out what types of tasks the students thought forums were suitable for. The options included tasks and exercises that had been used in the Canvas forums during the semester, and survey respondents were given the option to tick more than one option. The results are shown in *Figure* 2. Students found the forum function useful primarily as a means of expressing their views (57, 90.5 %), which they had previously mentioned as one of the main motivations for participating in forums. Similarly, they found forums useful for discussing translation difficulties (51, 80.9 %) and for transferring theoretical knowledge and discussing dilemmas (46, 73 %). Forums were also found to be a useful and effective tool for sharing parallel texts, for feedback on translations (44, 69.8 %) and for terminology work (37, 58.7 %). However, less than half of the respondents found forums suitable for translation preparation (28, 44.4 %), debate (27, 42.8 %), additional complementary tasks (13, 20.6 %) and sight translation, a frequently used exercise in presential classes (4, 6.3 %).

Figure 2
Types of tasks in forums



The results suggest that, although, the majority of students find the forum function a useful and effective tool to complement translation tasks, it may not be used successfully for all types of tasks, as one of the survey participants explained in response to a later question:

> I find forums useful for exchanging ideas, expressing opinions and terminological work, but the discussion of errors and difficulties encountered in translations should be discussed in presential or video sessions.

3.3.3. Forums, webinars, conventional lessons

The next set of questions focused on comparing the forum function as a virtual classroom with conventional face-to-face lessons and exploring preferences for synchronous (e.g. Zoom) and asynchronous (e.g. virtual classroom forum) modes of e-learning (questions 11 to 14). The majority of students (39, 61.9 %) felt that no forum could be more effective than presential classroom work, 17 (27 %) did not exclude the possibility, while 7 (11.1 %) were clearly in favour of using forums. The responses suggest that although for most students participation in forums may not be as effective as face-to-face classroom work, there are some students who prefer forum participation and thus e-learning in distance education settings.

When asked about the advantages of participating in forums compared to classroom work, only one respondent said that there were no advantages to participating in forums. The other respondents mainly listed advantages related to the asynchronous nature of the forums and the extended time limit. According to the

respondents, by moving away from the tight time constraints of contact hours, forums allow for longer and more detailed answers, there is no need to respond immediately to questions, and more time to consider answers. Students contribute to the forum when the experience is still fresh after the translation is done and when they feel prepared to respond. Also, there is time for everyone, no one misses the opportunity to contribute, so more different opinions are shared, and shy listeners are also given a chance:

> Taking part in forum discussions is an advantage for people who cannot really assert themselves in the classroom, for people who do not "dare" to voice their opinions in person.

Another important advantage of forums compared to classroom work is that students do not have to answer questions on the spot there are more opportunities for research and the use of tools. Specific links and parallel texts can be shown in the forums, and all shared information can be retrieved later as needed: 'spoken words fly away, written words remain'. The broader spatial and temporal dimension of the e-learning environment is thus seen as enabling more in-depth learning, creating equal opportunities for participation.

After reviewing the benefits of the forums, the question arose whether it might be worthwhile to complement presential classes with forums in the e-learning framework. The majority of survey respondents (29, 46 %) said that participation in forums would definitely be a useful addition to contact lessons, while almost a similar number (25, 39.7 %) thought that it might be worthwhile to use forums in face-to-face lessons. Only 9 people (14.3 %) said that it would not be useful at all to combine forums with conventional classes. These results – and the responses regarding the types of tasks described above – are consistent with the view that e-learning can be used in a bimodal or hybrid educational context, combined with face-to-face teaching (Pym et al. 2003: 85).

I also asked survey respondents which distance learning method they preferred: video lessons in the form of webinars or virtual classroom forums. Almost equal number of respondents said they preferred webinars (28, 44.4 %) or participation in forums (25, 39.7 %), with only a smaller proportion (10, 15.9 %) rejecting both forms of distance learning. However, it is clear from the responses that a certain proportion of students are not at all enthusiastic about distance learning and would probably not choose it voluntarily – so perhaps they cannot be expected to have a positive attitude towards forums and the e-learning environment in general. Furthermore, given the responses to the previous question, it is also likely that those who reject both modes of distance learning would not voluntarily participate in hybrid or bimodal education, either.

3.3.4. Opinions and suggestions

The penultimate question of the questionnaire sought to find out what students valued most about participating in the forums. Some of the responses contained similar findings to those listed earlier by students on the benefits of forum participation with asynchrony and documentation. It was appreciated that everyone was given a chance to contribute, everyone had a voice and everyone participated, even students who would probably have remained silent "live". Interaction and the experience of thinking together was important; in this way, the contributions of others were more emphasised than in a real classroom, where everyone looks primarily to the teacher as the primary source of information. Participation in the forums also added interactivity to the isolation and one-sidedness of distance learning, making the forums an interesting supplement to homework. All this suggests that the use of forums can offset some of the disadvantages and enhance some of the advantages of the e-learning environment (Pym 2002).

Students appreciated the participation of the teacher in the forums, in particular the questions initiating the discussions and the personal feedback on their contributions:

> It is especially important that our teacher responds to every comment and we receive detailed personal feedback from her, which makes a big difference to my ability to improve, and I feel it is worth writing down my opinion because it is listened to and valued.

> I appreciated the fact that everyone got personal feedback on their contributions, especially those that stood out in some way, without anyone being overshadowed.

It can therefore be concluded that although the instructor is no longer the primary source of knowledge in the e-learning environment, and the focus is on learner autonomy, he or she still has an important role as a mentor, as students look to their instructor for reinforcement and support, as well as for assessment in the learning process.

Students also positively assessed that forums – and written communication in general – made lessons more transparent, coherent and easy to follow. They received more complex and detailed answers to questions than in contact lessons or webinars. In e-learning, all resources are readily available, documents can be shared – no need to print – allowing an efficient flow of information. Overall, therefore, participation in the forums has been effective in supporting the learning process, as explained in the following opinion:

> I think that the forum is one of the best substitutes for classroom work. Through our discussions, we were able to take into account the opinions/suggestions of

> our peers, it was interesting to read who had comments on the given task, who found what, who had what kind of opinion. All this was useful for the translation task. The corrected translations and the teacher's suggestions shared in the forums provided good feedback to see if our translation solutions were good or if we made the right choices in the more critical parts.

The last question of the questionnaire gave the survey participants the opportunity to make suggestions about the forums, which of course also allowed for criticisms about forums in general and the forums of the semester in particular. Some of the survey respondents (13, 20.6 %) said that they had no suggestions, they got "everything they could get out of the Canvas forum sessions".

However, there were still a number of critical comments made regarding the forum discussions. Those completing the questionnaire would find it useful if the teacher put up forum starter questions that allow for a variety of responses from students, where each is given a unique task to avoid mere repetition. One way of doing this could be, for example, for the instructor to ask a question in the forum that requires the cooperation of the students to answer. Another way is for the teacher to actively participate in the forum as a moderator and facilitator, and when a discussion topic gets stuck, they can facilitate the discussion by adding another question or task, in order to give everyone a chance to respond constructively, and to finish the discussion with a valuable conclusion. Discussions in small groups can also make forums more effective, and the infrastructure of the Canvas learning management system allows for such solutions.

Although the responses described earlier highlighted the interaction in the forums as a positive aspect, some felt that they were "abandoned" and would have liked more and more active communication from the teacher. They would also have welcomed tasks which give more opportunities for discussion between the participants of the learning process, "since there is a greater need for team building in distance learning than ever before". These comments could, of course, also be due to the fact that the respondents of the questionnaire had started their studies in a face-to-face classroom and had not voluntarily taken up e-learning, but had been forced into the virtual classroom by the Covid-19 situation. However, it is worth considering how to further facilitate interaction between participants.

Several respondents suggested that it would be more convenient if forum participation did not count towards the end-of-semester assessment, i.e. the teacher did not make participation compulsory. However, it was also acknowledged – although no one likes to make their own task more difficult – that mandatory participation could be beneficial, as it forces withdrawers to step out and everyone benefits from the variety of contributions. The issue of deadlines also proved to be a crucial one: the Canvas platform did not always alert students to the approaching deadline, and timing was also a problem, as some students regularly contributed to the forum only at the last minute, thus reaping the benefits of others' work, while their peers were not helped in their translation task.

Finally, the responses to the last question reiterated the earlier idea that forum-based learning alone cannot fully meet the pedagogical objectives and that it would be necessary to combine asynchronous e-learning methods with face-to-face classes or webinar sessions:

> We either had webinar sessions or forums. I think we should mix the two, perhaps that would be the most effective form of distance learning. For example, we could use the forums to prepare the translation, do joint research, ask quick questions, upload the corrected translation so that everyone can correct theirs, and then in a video lesson we could ask more specific questions in 30-40 minutes, because it is much quicker and more efficient to discuss things personally.

Students' opinions are consistent with the view expressed in the literature that the optimal solution can be provided by bimodal forms of education (Pym et al. 2003: 85). Thus, as the effectiveness of attendance-based education can be facilitated by e-learning methods, the effectiveness of e-learning may be enhanced by occasional personal (video) consultations.

3.3.5. Correlation coefficients in relation to the academic year

As discussed above in the presentation of the survey, the questionnaire was completed by first- and second-year students of the Department of Translation and Interpreting, and the academic year of the participants may have influenced their perception of the forum function of the Canvas learning management system. On the one hand, first-year students had less experience in presential education at the time of completing the questionnaire, on the other hand, the choice of specialisation takes place in the second year of a Master's degree, and there might have been some first-year students among the participants who were planning to work more in the field of interpreting in the future, instead of translation. The latter is supported by the fact that statistical analysis revealed a slight but significant Pearson correlation coefficient between respondents' preferences for the mode of language mediation (translation 51, 81 %; interpretation 12, 19 %) and their year of study ($r = -.368$, $p = .003$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that more first-year than second-year students plan to do interpreting in the future.

Further correlational statistical tests were conducted to check whether the academic year of the survey participants influenced students' perceptions of the usefulness and effectiveness of the forums, their incorporation into classroom work, and their effectiveness in relation to presential and e-learning. As can be seen from the numbers in Table 2, the analyses revealed only a low correlation between the respondents' academic year and the other variables of the survey, and in none of the cases can a significant ($p < 0.01$) relationship be reported. It can therefore be concluded that the academic year of the survey respondents, and hence the differ-

ence in the number of semesters spent in presential learning settings and the preference for the mode of language mediation, did not influence the responses on the effectiveness and usefulness of the forums or their applicability in relation to other modes of teaching.

Table 2
Correlations of individual variables with the academic year of the survey participants

Variables	Pearson correlation (r)	Significance (p)
Forum usefulness	.147	250
Forum efficiency	.056	660
Contact lessons vs. forums	.240	058
Forums in presential classes	–.091	480
Webinars vs. forums	.137	283

4. Conclusion

Distance education, imposed as a necessary solution due to the Covid-19 pandemic emergency, has created an opportunity to conduct research on e-learning. The aim of the present study was to explore the effectiveness of the ELTE-supported Canvas learning management system, focusing on the "virtual classroom" interaction of the participants in the learning process. The responses to the questions seem to confirm the views expressed in the literature on the benefits of the e-learning environment (Pym 2002; Pym et al. 2003; Bereczki et al. 2020) and also revealed that, although respondents believe that the benefits of presential education outweigh the opportunities offered by e-learning, some of its features may be worth exploiting in hybrid or bimodal teaching formats, even in combination with contact lessons (Pym et al. 2003: 85). Furthermore, learning in a digital educational framework has the potential to counterbalance the disadvantages of the e-learning environment, its forum function can reduce the isolation of participants, create opportunities for interaction and break the potential monotony of work.

The key to interaction in the learning process is primarily in the hands of the instructor, whose role – although the emphasis in the e-learning environment is on learner autonomy – remains crucial to the success of the learning process: students still rely on their teacher for support, guidance, assessment, and final conclusions. The burden of being a mentor and facilitator is undoubtedly placed on the teacher, and therefore, in addition to the time and energy involved in designing the course content and the learning process, this must be taken into account when setting up

e-learning courses. In any case, learning management tools such as the Canvas framework offer a great number of possibilities to help the instructor's work.

The results of the survey suggest that, although students mostly perceive the forum function of the digital platform as a useful and effective tool for initiating interaction and complementing translation tasks, there are still deficiencies and not all types of tasks can be successfully addressed by using forums. Consideration should therefore be given to combining asynchronous pedagogical methods with synchronous methods, such as personal consultations or webinar sessions. It is also worthwhile fine-tuning the methods of e-learning and specifically the use of forums, based on the comments made by the students. In addition to the reports on the methodological aspects of e-learning, further insights into the everyday life of distance learning during the pandemic situation can be found in the article on students' experiences in this volume (Robin 2021).

When evaluating the results of the present research, it is worth bearing in mind that the survey was conducted among full-time Master's students, so that it included – as the responses showed – people who would certainly not have chosen distance learning voluntarily, and who were forced to take this solution only because of the pandemic situation. They may thus have had an inherently negative attitude towards the virtual classroom and forum discussions, influencing their perceptions of the usefulness and effectiveness of forums. However, it is also clear from the responses received that there are some students who prefer distance learning. It may therefore be worth repeating this research in the future with students of specifically designed distance learning courses. Nevertheless, the results of the questionnaire survey and the comments from students may already contribute to improving the effectiveness of virtual classrooms.

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Appendix

Covid-19 and distance education

Due to the Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic, the university introduced distance education, which requires special teaching methods, while at the same time trying to maintain the quality of education. This questionnaire is intended to assess the effectiveness of the forum function of the Canvas learning management system. Thank you so much for your participation in the survey and for your candid answers. By filling out the questionnaire, you help us do more efficient work in distance learning in the future.

Many thanks,
Edina Robin

1. Your gender

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

2. What year are you in?

- ☐ 1st
- ☐ 2nd

3. What would you like to do more in the future?

- ☐ Interpretation
- ☐ Translation

4. Did you participate in the forums during the course?

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Most of the time
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Never

5. What motivated you to participate in forums?

   _____

6. Why didn't you take part in the forums?

   _____

7. Did you find the forums useful?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Very

8. Do you think that participating in the forums is an effective way to prepare for translations and to transfer additional knowledge?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Very

9. Do you think it is unnecessary, a waste of time to take part in forums?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Very

10. What types of tasks were the forums suitable for?
    - ☐ Terminological preparation
    - ☐ Debate
    - ☐ Preparation for translation
    - ☐ Statement of opinion
    - ☐ Feedback for translation
    - ☐ Sharing parallel texts
    - ☐ Other additional tasks
    - ☐ Sight translation
    - ☐ Discussion of translation difficulties
    - ☐ Theoretical information, dilemmas

11. In your opinion, can forums be more effective than classroom work?
    - ☐ Yes
    - ☐ No
    - ☐ Maybe

12. What are the advantages of taking part in forums compared to classroom work?

    _____

13. Would it be worth supplementing standard face-to-face classes with forums?
    - ☐ Yes
    - ☐ No
    - ☐ Maybe

14. Which online form of distance education do you prefer?
    - ☐ Video lessons (Zoom)
    - ☐ Virtual classroom with forums
    - ☐ Neither of them

15. What did you appreciate most in the forums?

    _____

16. What would you change about the forums? (Share your suggestions:)

    _____

    _____

A real-life translation project with several groups within the framework of distance education

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Abstract: During the *Translation project* course, the students are able to prepare for the professional expectations of the translation market, and during the semester they participated in a real-life translation project. The students translated and proofread 64 incident reports with 1000-1500 words. The translated texts were characterised by the continuous change in register, and the written texts often demonstrated the characteristics of spoken language. Based on the feedback of 14 students, it can be concluded that the students appreciate the fact that they participated in a real-life translation project, and the emotional style of the texts made their work more interesting. In the feedback, the students reflected on the quality of the source texts, the process of proofreading and the dynamics of the online work mode. According to the teachers' experience, keeping deadlines did not cause problems for the students, but the formatting of the target texts and breaking away from surface elements of the source texts posed difficulties. Although during a global pandemic, it is important to keep in mind difficulties (such as the mental health of the students), the online work mode still presents an opportunity to develop certain professional skills.

Keywords: translation project course, incident analysis, register change, real-life translation project, online work mode

1. Introduction

The present study describes the most important experiences of the Translation Project course, summarised at the end of the distance learning period. The general aim of the course is to acquire advanced functions of CAT-tools and to learn how to communicate with the clients in the future. Students also experience teamwork and develop a professional knowledge on translation projects' pricing, participants and their tasks in translation processes, as well as the development of translation competences. In distance teaching, students having French or English as their B language participated in a complex translation project where they could

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try themselves out not only as translators, but also as peer reviewers and contact persons.

The texts translated during the project consisted of 1000 to 1500 word accounts of critical incidents experienced by social workers, health workers or persons helped by social workers and health workers. The characteristic of this type of text is that registers are constantly changing, and texts carry the specificities of the spoken language. The project involved 26 students, two clients and two teachers. A total of 64 incident reports were translated and reviewed by students from English or French to Hungarian.

We collected difficulties and experiences of the course by asking students for an anonymous, freely built evaluation at the end of the semester. We asked the students to describe in a few sentences what they learned from the six-months' work, what their personal opinion about the project was, what was difficult at the level of the project, translation and peer review. We were also curious to know the extent to which the six-months' work was influenced, encumbered or facilitated by the transition to distance learning. A total of 14 students answered our questions. Based on the answers and the experience of the teachers, it can be concluded that the project was generally positively appreciated by students, especially because it had been a real-life translation assignment. The quality of the texts to be translated, the process of proofreading and the entire online session were given a special role in the evaluation of the project. According to the answers, the latter does not necessarily constitute an obstacle to translation training, but rather provides a separate opportunity to develop certain competences, while at the same time posing a challenge to translation education, which is exploiting online tools only to a limited extent.

2. Translation project course

This course is an integral part of the training of students in translation and interpreting, but due to distance learning established in March, the structure of the project has changed, as reported in the following subsections.

2.1. Objectives and structure of the course

Students who choose to specialise in translation during their masters will take part in the Translation Project course in both semesters of the second year, which is a continuation of a course focusing on CAT-tools in the first year. During the project, students will learn more about the functions of CAT-tools. Unlike on other courses, during the Translation Project course it is possible for them to get to know the composition of the translation market, the participants in the translation process before graduation (translators, reviewers, project managers, vendor managers, post editors, clients, etc.). The main difference between the first and second semesters

is that in the first semester, students work alongside the continuous management, monitoring and advice of the teachers. In the second semester, the problems associated with the project and also with real life will be solved more independently at the level expected of graduate translators (delaying, slipping due to illness, incorrect file format, etc.). This independent work was given a prominent role in the crisis announced in 2020, when universities switched to distance learning and the planned course of the translation project had to be changed. Ideally, during the second semester, the teacher would act as a helper or mentor (King 2005), although due to the unexpected situation, this was only partially possible.

During the two semesters, students will learn about the process and phases of translation project management, the full spectrum of translation assignments. They gain general knowledge of the process and possibilities of pricing, the organisational structure of translation offices, the steps in ordering a translation. Communication with the translation office or client, confirmation of the order, the provision of value-adding services for the translation are a priority. All of this prepares students to become a future freelance translator. The other aim of the course is to raise awareness of translation decisions, to improve the skills of translators and reviewers, to refine teamwork suitability and to acquire advanced functions of CAT-tools (statistics, proofreading, quality control, etc.). Thus, the teaching of the translation project is based on the coordinated development of a number of skills, where workflow planning (time, resources), professional communication with the client, the use of CAT-tools, and autonomous learning play a prominent role (Kovács 2016).

2.2. Teaching translation project work in a crisis situation

In the case of the project in the spring semester of the 2019/2020 school year, cooperation with the client started half a year earlier in the autumn semester. We were looking for a sharp project for MA2 translation students having English as a B language as well as for students of audiovisual translation and specialised translation training, where students can learn about the process of translation work through a real-life translation assignment. In a public Facebook group, we noticed Képes Foundation (see Internet links) was looking for volunteer translators. We contacted the Foundation, who were extremely open to cooperation. This positive attitude continued to contribute to the success of the project.

The Foundation deals with the development of programmes and publications for the development of social and emotional skills, including the prevention and sensitising of social workers. In the autumn semester, the two groups participated in the translation of a new publication (Burn-out Prevention in Social Work – under publication) and in the review of the translations already completed. At the beginning of the project, the president of the Foundation, Anna Rácz, economist and psychologist, gave a lecture on the subject of the publication at the university. This personal appearance helped students to contextualise the translation assignment,

and they could consult the client in advance on the issues raised. Another advantage of a personal meeting was that the students then addressed their questions more boldly to the client. However, it is important to note that the pandemic did not allow translation students having French as a B language to meet personally with the representatives of the Foundation, because this group was working on a different project during the previous semester and only joined the project in the semester of the crisis. These students were able to get to know the client through a Zoom call. Another difference is that this group had a special schedule in both semesters due to the teacher's research work abroad.

After the successful first half of the project, the Foundation first contacted us with the possibility of translating a new, larger project. Within the framework of the international project of Resicare (see Internet links), the students had to translate 64 incident reports from French or English into Hungarian. Texts presented conflict situations using the method of critical incident analysis. The descriptions were about social workers and health workers, as well as clients who needed their help. The translation of 64 incident reports, typically consisting of 1000-1500 words, required serious organisation. Therefore, the project involved not only one group with 17 students doing second-year work on English-Hungarian translation projects, but also three translator students working on a French-Hungarian project, six students studying on an audiovisual and specialised translation course and six former audiovisual and specialised translation students. Due to the large amount of texts and the great number of participants, we had to develop new methods to ensure the effectiveness of teamwork. The situation was further complicated by the switch to distance learning in early March due to the Covid-19 epidemic.

3. Presentation of the translation project

A total of 26 students, two contact persons and two teachers participated in the translation project. The nature of the translated texts, the process and participants of the project are discussed in detail in the following subsections.

3.1. The translated texts

The texts translated during the project each consisted of 1000 to 1500 words of critical incidents experienced by social workers, health workers or people helped by social workers and health workers. The structure of the texts was similar (see Appendix). They all began with the title, which was often idiomatic. This was followed by a description of the critical incident in the first person, as described by the person experiencing the conflict. The next part of the text summarised the characters, identity, and characteristics of the story in a schematic, tabular form, including differences and similarities between the narrator and the other person involved in the conflict. The following section summarised the context of the con-

flict, including the physical environment in which the conflict took place, the social and psychological context, and a summary of the reactions and emotions caused by the incident. The rest of the text analysed the conflict from the perspective of the narrator and then the other person. The factual description of the incident *(the top of the iceberg)* and the list of emotions generated *(under the water)* were followed by an examination of the emotions behind the reactions. The latter were typically published in the form of metaphors in the source language text. A summary of the reactions and emotions of the other person involved in the conflict in a similar structure built up the next section of the texts. In the final part, the authors tried to identify common values from the perspective of the narrator and the other person, and made suggestions for similar situations in the future.

The appeal of these texts and one of their main translation difficulties lies in the alternation of registers. The characteristic of specialised languages is that, in the case of diachronic language versions between laymen and professionals, participants in communication have different professional knowledge (Kurtán 2003: 33), therefore, other terms, words and expressions are used. However, the purpose of each type of text is in line with the choice of terms (e.g. the use of scientific terminology for professional audiences, the use of common words for lay audiences), it may be difficult to translate the register in the given texts, since one part is the narrative of the person helped by the social worker and the other is the opinion of the social worker or the psychologist. Another interesting detail is that in this case the written texts often carried the specificities of the spoken language, which posed another challenge for students.

These 64 texts, although in principle based on the same method of analysis, contained differences, mostly due to the fact that they originated from three different countries. The team of Hungarian, French and Spanish professionals participating in the Resicare programme conducted interviews with social workers, health workers and people who needed their help. In the interviews, the participants related situations in which some cultural difference led to tension and discomfort. 16-16 texts were collected in Hungary and France, and 32 texts came from Spanish collections. The source language of the translations was English, as all texts were translated into English as part of the international project. The texts were not written and translated by native English speakers, so the source language text was actually the result of a previous translation. The same can be observed in the case of texts originally collected in Hungary, as they have been written in English, but by Hungarian professionals and not native speakers. The exceptions were six French texts, where we received the original French versions.

3.2. Progress of the project

The project was launched at the same time as distance learning was introduced at the university. During the semester it wasn't possible for the groups to meet the client in person. For the French language students, who did not participate in the

previous project last semester, the client prepared a summary of the most important information about the project, and answered questions via Zoom and e-mail.

Since the texts were similar in structure, but handled by different translators, it was necessary to create a template for recurring expressions and headings that appeared in each text. This helped students in terminological harmonisation and in building the terminology database. In the preparatory phase of the project, the client prepared a template for the Hungarian texts in advance. The launch of the project was an email sent to all participants, which included a description of the project by the teachers and the client, the detailed objectives of the project, the structure of the texts and a summary of the psychological analysis method described and used in the texts. In addition, this first letter also determined the channels and the order of communication.

Since the students participating in the project took four different courses, we had to choose a contact platform to which everyone had equal access. Instead of merging the different groups in Canvas (see Internet links), which was used by the university for distance learning course management, we decided to use Google's available services. In order to discuss issues of public interest, we created a group on Hangouts (Google's chat service), and students could write questions here during the project work. In addition to the teachers of the course, the client could also follow this chat. We created a Google Drive folder system, uploaded the texts to be translated and the additional materials needed for the translation – the schedule of texts, the timetable, and the template that students had to use during translation. We created a separate folder for the peer-reviewed translations, which the students had to upload when finished.

The additional material included a Google Sheets table containing the titles of all texts to be translated, in which the teachers first entered which text should be translated by which student. It was the students' task to find their texts to translate in the Drive folder, and they had to finish filling out the table with their email addresses. Each text was assigned a translator and a proofreader. The translator was selected by the teachers, but the students were given a free hand in choosing which translation to proofread. Their choice had to be marked in the appropriate column of the table. Most students based their choice not on the text but on the translation partner, so translator-proofreader pairs were created. The communication and timetable between the translator and the proofreader was entrusted to the students, guidance was given only on how much time should be devoted to the review and that it is worth doing it in collaboration with the translator.

In addition, there was another Google Sheets table, which allowed students to enter recurring expressions, questions and comments on them during the translation, thus ensuring cooperation and the creation of unified texts by many translators. This part of the translation project work is tailored to the expectations of the translation market, since translators need to communicate with other language professionals working on the same text and they have to cooperate with the proofreaders, clients and project managers. In the profession it is essential to keep dead-

lines, so in the initial letter we highlighted the deadline for submitting translations (May 15 and end of May) and that we expect students to actively assist in cooperation by asking questions and leaving comments.

After the initial letter, the actual translation and proofreading work began. Questions, comments were sent by e-mail or in the chat group. Typically, members of smaller groups (e.g. the students from the French translation master's) proved to be more active in both the common table and in the chat room. At the appointed weekly time of the project work class, teachers were always available, and if a more complex question was raised, it could be discussed in video conference.

The students' peer-reviewed translations, which were submitted by May 15 and the end of May, were reviewed by the teachers as well. The texts were then finalised and forwarded to the client. At the end of the project, it was found that a total of 7 texts had not been translated, and these were finally undertaken and prepared by students graduated from the audiovisual translation and specialised translation training course in 2019. All the translations of the project were completed by mid-July after being reviewed by the teachers. The project was useful because the students first encountered the phenomenon of adapting to a new situation during a translation assignment, and also they had to shorten the time allocated to translations.

After submitting the translations, we asked the students to write in their own words a few sentences about the experiences of the semester and the project work. We asked them to address the difficulties, to enlist the most useful elements of the project, and to describe their experiences and opinions of the semester's work. The conclusions drawn from their responses are discussed in subsection 4 of the study.

3.3. Parties involved in the project work

The translations were completed by a total of 26 students. 17 of them participated in the master's course in English-Hungarian language pairs, and three in French-Hungarian language pairs. The latter students received the original text of the incident reports in French. In addition, six students from the audiovisual and specialised translation course took part in the project. In the main phase of the project, during the second half of the semester (from end of March to mid-June), the students mainly translated. The master's students translated and reviewed two texts each, the audiovisual translators only one per student. The division was justified by the fact that audiovisual students worked on another project during the first half of the semester. The 46 texts thus translated were completed by the end of May. Of the remaining 18 texts, the master's students have undertaken 11 as voluntary translations to be completed by the end of June after their final exam. The seven remaining texts were taken on by students who graduated a year earlier from the audiovisual and specialised translation course of ELTE, but only after the completion of the first phase of the project in May.

The project was coordinated by the authors of this study, Dániel Mány from the French-Hungarian translation project course, and Judit Sereg from the English-Hungarian and audiovisual part. Our role was to prepare the project's schedule, to set deadlines, as well as to keep continuous contact with students and the client during the work. As students from different groups worked on the same project, it was important that the two teachers continuously consult with each other during the semester. Due to the complexity of the project and the unexpected situation, in view of the professional development and emotional support of students, the previously mentioned "mentor" role was only partially realised, and during the semester more support was needed by the teachers. This required more time, energy and patience from both teachers and students. The project's progress was facilitated by the fact that we had two contact persons from the side of the client, who were available for any question.

4. Experiences

After the closing of the project and receiving feedback from the clients and the students, we summarised the most important experiences of the semester, which will be taken into account in future semesters.

4.1. Students' experiences

At the end of a semester, it is always important to assess the experience the students gained during the project work, especially in a year where the course had been out of the ordinary in a lot of respects. Instead of using a pre-developed questionnaire, we asked them to summarise in their own words what they thought of the project, what they found hard, interesting or useful, what they learned from it, etc. We chose this method instead of a questionnaire because it is a more reflective type of feedback which only guides the students' answers along predefined topics. We found it useful for students to formulate their own opinions honestly and in their own words. The answers were recorded anonymously. By evaluating the answers using the keyword analysis method, we learned many useful lessons from the semester.

Feedback was requested from 26 students, including students from the master's courses and the audiovisual translator course. We did not ask already graduated former students for feedback, as they only joined the project at a later stage, and their responses would not have reflected the difficulties of the semester. Out of the 26 students, 14 sent back the requested evaluation.

In general, students evaluated the project work positively. Ten respondents expressed a general opinion on the project, of which nine were clearly positive. They found the project and the texts interesting, they were happy to work on them, and they considered the project work to be exciting and useful. One student point-

ed out that at the beginning he approached the project with reservations, but was "positively disappointed". Another student described the real project with multiple participants as a "super initiative", and defined it as a "great refreshment". Five of the positive assessments emphasised that the work and the text to be translated were both realistic, and six students specifically praised their uniqueness. Most respondents (a total of eight), commented that it was refreshing to work on texts which had emotional and cultural aspects instead of dry legal or economic texts.

As for specific details, the majority of respondents addressed three areas in their evaluation: the difficulty the texts posed during translation, the proofreading process and the change to distance learning.

As for the texts to be translated, five respondents thought that the texts to be translated were not difficult. However, five commented that it was difficult to interpret the English text in many places, and it was evident that the source texts were also translations, and this often led to situations where "the translator had to figure out what the author was thinking". Some people thought it was "frustrating." However, in the translation market (especially in the case of translations from small languages), the source language text is often also a translation, so we found it useful that the students could try themselves out in a new situation in this respect as well.

We received a number of feedbacks on the proofreading process as well. Eight respondents highlighted the positive aspects of the review task, the proper functioning of the proofreader-translator relationship, and the usefulness of continuous communication and negotiation on translational problems. Six specifically commented on the fact that during the thorough discussion of the translation they have learnt a lot. Three of them highlighted the more difficult aspects of the proofreading process. Two students commented that they should have been given more time to review, but they haven't been able to calculate the needed time in advance, and a third student wrote in detail about how it was more difficult for her to be a proofreader than a translator, because she felt that she had little experience in it, and often felt guilty when she made changes in the translated text. It can be concluded from the answers that it is important to place particular emphasis on the work schedule during translation and proofreading, and to plan workflows in advance.

12 students commented on the transition to online work, and ten of them considered it an evident difficulty. Two mentioned that they felt the lack of contact lessons particularly hard. Five people wrote that although online interfaces were available for the reconciliation of terminology, many participants did not use them, and also only a few people used the common communication interfaces, so the harmonisation of terminology in the online space did not work effectively. One student also noted that "it is much more difficult to agree on something online which could have been discussed in person in just a few minutes". Another student suggested that they were less inclined to open a discussion in an online chat as they were aware of the fact that it would be seen by many of their fellow students. In the context of the online workflow, the number of participants has also been highlighted as a complicating factor. Four pointed out that working with such a large

number of participants online was much more difficult than having smaller groups. Only two students highlighted the positive aspects of the online workflow. One found it educational that it was necessary to work on a real assignment without the possibility of personal consultation, which made the work more similar to a real-life assignment, and another student said that the project work was "exactly the type of course that could be done from home easily".

It was clear from the feedback of the students that although real work under realistic conditions is appreciated in project work classes, and they generally find it useful and interesting, a completely online course still poses a difficulty for many. Based on the answers, the online interfaces created for the harmonisation of terminology and texts have not been, or only limitedly, used, because the students found it discouraging that many people would see their comments. Although we have really moved students out of their comfort zone in this respect, such an experience can benefit them in the long run. In real market conditions it is common for a translator to work with several other translators, terminologists and project managers on a larger text, and they usually keep in touch only in the online space. It is important for translators entering the translation market to be aware that it is important to discuss issues in an online space as well, in order to achieve a proper translation. In this respect, the online workflow, even if it is more difficult for translation students, actually helps to improve the competence of online cooperation, which they may need in the world of real work and which is not, or only limitedly, developed in other courses. The introduction and testing of an online course can be useful even if it is not made necessary by a global pandemic. Although the possibility of *co-working* for translators had increased before the pandemic, in the vast majority of cases, translators use online tools to communicate with the translation agency and with those involved in the translation process. Thus, although distance learning might have deviated from the usual educational method at the university, it partly prepared students for the circumstances of the translation market. In distance learning, the importance of tolerance for monotony and the lack of social relations probably played a greater role.

On the other hand, the large number of participants in the project can still be considered as a hindrance. Consultation and online work were made difficult by the large number of students based on their feedback. From this point of view, it may be worth setting up smaller groups for similar projects in the future, who can cooperate more closely with each other. Also, if the amount of texts justifies, as in this case, it might be useful to carry out more preparatory work, and to entrust preparatory work to a smaller group of students, who can in turn have a smaller share of translation. The fact that the three students from the French-Hungarian language pair and the six audiovisual translator students were the most active in completing the terminology table and in the joint chat as well, shows that smaller groups might be more effective in cooperative projects.

With regard to the texts to be translated, it is worth noting that a significant number of students considered it positive that while most of their translations were

legal texts on the other courses of the semester, during translation project work they were able to work with easier source language texts. Since the project work's main goal is not improving translation skills, but to prepare the students for real-life translation assignments, it is important to learn about the project process and to create more similar conditions to real working conditions. It is worthwhile to choose less professional and less dry texts than legal ones for such courses. This is also important because translation assignments are not limited to specialised translations, and with the help of the texts translated in this project, students have also been able to develop skills that are less likely needed when translating technical texts. Among other things, the spoken language nature of the written text, the abstract language elements, the emotional and cultural aspects of the texts could present a novelty for most students. In addition, by working on a real translation assignment, their work became more meaningful, and they learned what it was like to work with a real client, thus gaining an even more realistic experience from the course. For the motivation of the students it was important that they knew that their translations would be published and made available online, which naturally made them more committed to presenting high quality work.

Based on their feedback, proofreading also gave students a lot of useful experience. While only a few people used actively the common channels of communication, feedback revealed that there was very active, back and forth communication between the proofreaders and translators, which was found to be useful on both sides. It is also worth putting emphasis on peer review during every translation course, as students learn a lot from the evaluation of each other's work, and it is also important that they would be aware of the process of peer review before entering the translation market. After all, if they start working, their translations will be proofread by others, and they would need to work together with the proofreaders. Moreover, proofreading is important because the translations received from the teacher and the ones corrected by the proofreaders are partly different. The proofreader for example, does not specifically address the good solutions of the translator. The pedagogical nature is thus only partially realised during the peer review process, and this makes the situation more similar to real-life work assignments.

4.2. Experience of the teachers

Before handing it over to the client, the teachers reviewed the uploaded texts already proofread by the students. In general, the texts showed that the students invested the necessary attention and energy in the translation. A total of two translations had to be retranslated by the teachers. The deadlines had been kept almost without exception, and as a result of proofreading by other students, the quality of the texts improved. In one case, the student finished the translation so late that her proofreader could not read it in time. In this case, the reviewer turned to us for help, and finally the translation was sent by the translator without proofreading.

The task showed the students that late delivery may cause difficulties not only for the customer, but for all participants of the translation process, and the deadline for the whole project may be jeopardised.

As the students mentioned in their evaluations, the pre-established terminology table and the chat group were used by only a few students. In the future, it would be worth developing a system that might encourage students to work more actively on the online interfaces in a similar situation. If the technological setup allows it, MemoQ's chat function may be used as well. However, during the semester we did not encourage students to use MemoQ for communication purposes, because the clients were not translators and therefore they did not own and weren't familiar with the software. A points system might be useful in the future, where students can earn points for comments, questions and responses on the online interfaces, and the gathered points would be added to their end-of-semester results. It is also possible to create specific tasks related to the additional materials. It can also be helpful if the terminology is compiled to a deadline before the translation starts, so it is not necessary for students to work on the terminology and on the translation at the same time.

Compliance with typological requirements is still a problem for students. Although the initial letter clearly stated that the translation should be done in the template provided by the client, many of them translated the texts in the format of the originals. This may have been due to lack of attention, but also because they worked in a CAT-tool, which might have made their work easier, but caused the target language text to deviate from the typological requirements of the client.

From the point of view of terminology, the majority of students followed the list of terms provided in advance by the clients, but the terms the team agreed on later were used less frequently – in this case the students probably did not follow the jointly-managed table. It is therefore important that students better immerse in the spirit of teamwork and realise the consequences of having many participants in the translation process. Another problem was that in many cases students had difficulty separating from the source language text and keeping the morphosyntactic structure of the target language text in mind during translation. It is also important to emphasise the freedom of translators when choosing synonyms, segmenting complex sentences, using explicitations and pragmatic adaptations.

It was also difficult during the semester that the daily life of all the participants in the project changed drastically, nevertheless the teachers had to ensure the motivation of the students. In many cases, students reported difficulties in their personal or family life, they missed the community at the university, and their career development had been significantly affected by the pandemic situation. The teachers had to tread with care, and had to find a middle ground between empathy and expectations.

On the basis of the above, it can be concluded that although the unexpected transition to distance learning had been difficult, project work is indeed one of the courses where the online workflow does not necessarily have a negative impact on the learning benefits of the course and even provides a special opportunity to de-

velop certain competences. In the future, it is worth devising further methods to increase the online activity of students and to work out the best way to conduct such a course. We can say for sure that a real assignment and a course with a workflow that is as close as possible to real working conditions will definitely provide students with positive and useful experiences.

5. Conclusion

During the Translating Project Work course, students learn about the full spectrum of the translation process and all the actors involved in the translation process, thus gaining knowledge about the organisational structure of translation offices and the steps in ordering a translation assignment. Communication with the client, awareness of translation decisions, the development of translational and proofreading skills, and the acquisition of advanced skills in the use of CAT-tools are key.

The actual real translation project was commissioned by the Képes Foundation, which deals with the development of programs and publications for the development of social and emotional skills, including burnout prevention and sensitisation of social workers. During the project, the students translated and reviewed 64 case descriptions, typically consisting of 1000 to 1500 words. Therefore, the project involved not only one group, 17 students doing their second-year in English-Hungarian translation project work, but also three translator students from the French-Hungarian translation project work course, six students studying on audiovisual and specialised translation courses and six former audiovisual and specialised translation students. As a result of the Covid-19 epidemic, the university switched to distance learning from the beginning of March. As for the texts to be translated, the register of the texts proved to be difficult for the students. One part of the texts was the narrative of the social caregiver and the other was the opinion of the psychologist. Another interesting aspect was that the written texts often carried the specificities of spoken language, which posed another challenge for the students.

After the completion of the project work, it can be concluded from the feedback of 14 students that the students evaluated the course positively. Five of the positive evaluations pointed out that the work and the text to be translated were both realistic, and six specifically praised the fact that they were interesting. A total of eight respondents particularly appreciated that they had to work not on dry legal texts but on more interesting texts that had emotional and cultural aspects as well. The majority of respondents covered three specific areas in their evaluation: the quality of the texts to be translated, the process of proofreading and the online workflow. Based on the experience of the teachers, adhering to deadlines was not a problem, but it might be necessary to place greater emphasis on the harmonisation and use of terminology and the terminology database. It was difficult for some of the students to use a target language template instead of the original formatting of the source language text for their translations, and they tended to follow the

structure of the source language text too closely, resulting in a deterioration in the readability of the target language text. During the semester, the daily life of all participants changed drastically due to the pandemic, and therefore it was important to keep in mind the mental health of the students as well. However, the online workflow does not necessarily have a negative impact on the learning benefits of the course, and it may even provide a special opportunity to develop certain competences.

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Internet resources:

Canvas https://canvas.elte.hu/belepes/
Képes Foundation http://www.kepesalapitvany.hu/roacutelunk.html
Resicare http://www.kepesalapitvany.hu/resicare.html

Appendix

Source language text (extract)

“NOT RELIGION”

The incident:
In 2001, I experienced the loss of a pregnancy, which was to be my fourth child. Almost a year later, I was in a deep and painful state of depression and decided to consult a private psychologist. Considering the characteristics of depression, I came to think that I might have a real psychological pathology. [...]

THE ACTORS PRESENT, THEIR IDENTITIES, HOW ARE THEY RELATED

NARRATOR:
Woman of Chilean origin, French citizen through marriage, 37 years old […]

OTHER PERSON:
Professional, 48-year-old Catalan psychologist, who has her practice in a suburb of Barcelona. […]

WHAT BRINGS THEM TOGETHER?
— The gender: women
[…]

WHAT’S KEEPING THEM APART?
— Nationality: Latin American – Catalan
[…]

TEXTUAL ELEMENTS

Physical setting
Year 2002, Castelldefels, Barcelona. […]

Social, psychological context
Outside of therapy, the patient is supported by family, friends who live nearby and an occasional outside visitor. […]

♪ Shock reactions, feelings experienced ♪
It‘s sadness. Feelings of loneliness, abandonment. […]

Exploration of the framework of the narrator’s reference frame (ICEBERG)

Psychological therapy session in relation to the patient's persistent depressive state

Surface of the iceberg:

Female […]

Emotions:

Sadness, abandonment and loneliness […]

Under the water:

Religiosity […]

Exploration of the framework of the person who caused the shock (ICEBERG)

Psychological therapy session in relation to the patient's persistent depressive state

Surface of the iceberg:

Woman, Catalan, private psychologist […]

Under the water:

Trust […]

CONCLUSION – NEGOTIATION MARGIN

Common value: Trust […]
In this case, the main potential negotiator would have been in the question: *In what sense does your religion provide you with resources?* […]

Digital education and artificial intelligence – Observations regarding the use of a digital teaching platform

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Abstract: The entire Hungarian educational system shifted to distance learning in the second semester of 2019/2020 due to the Covid–19 pandemic. During this period, the term „digital" education was extensively used by many, though it covered a wide range of different activities. In the first part of this study, I summarise what we, based on my experience, mean by digital education, including the explanation of the four phases of digital education, with a view to how it changes the process of teaching. I also look at the application of artificial intelligence in digital education, as well as its methodology. Finally, I analyse the changes inthe role of the teacher, given the extensive use of artificial intelligence, and the opportunities that teachers may find in the new situation. In the second part of the study, I present the result of the correlation analysis to verify the efficiency of the digital teaching platform developed by Anglofon Studio, including the findings of a questionnaire made after the distance learning at the Faculty of Humanities and the Faculty of Law of Eötvös Loránd University during the pandemic.

Keywords: distance learning, digital education, artificial intelligence, digital teaching platform

1. Introduction

The entire Hungarian educational system shifted to remote education in the second semester of 2019/2020 due to the Covid–19 pandemic. Even though the concepts of distance learning and digital education were not novel in the field of pedagogy, such terms were used mostly interchangeably in government and press communications in the context of the digital curriculum ordered during the coronavirus pandemic, but also by educational institutions through the compulsory publishing of information for parents and pupils. Even in specialised pedagogy literature, the various forms of education were given many names, often without clear explanations of what the concept entailed and, therefore, terms such as digital education, computer assisted learning, online education and e-learning often appeared as synonyms (see Komenczi 2014; Kovalik-Deák 2021; Robin 2021). The common feature of the various forms of remote learning was that students did not visit the

educational institutions' buildings, but instead teachers communicated with them mostly via online channels. Many used the term "digital education" in this context, even though it encompassed a wide range of activities ranging from sending scanned worksheets through e-mail to using learning management systems (Bereczki et al. 2020).

Based on my many years of experience in the field of education and observations from using a digital platform developed by Anglofon Studio, in the first part of this essay I aim to present what digital education actually means, how the educational process works in a digital framework and to what extent digital education affects the teaching process. In this part I also examine how traditional educational methods can be incorporated into the methodology of digital education and how the role of the teacher changes as a result of transitioning to digital education. Firstly, I will present the phases of a teaching process and show in what way digital technology affects traditional methodology, the novelties in each phase, how to take advantage of the opportunities given by digital technology and how to overcome difficulties in this respect. Secondly, I will look at how to use artificial intelligence in digital education and to what extent, and lastly, I will analyse the changes in the teacher's role as a result of transition to digital education, in what tasks the teacher's work is replaced by artificial intelligence and what remains a teacher's duty, as well as look at the opportunities this new situation provides teachers. In the second part of this essay, I present the results of a correlation analysis examining the effectiveness of the digital education platform used by Anglofon Studio, and the results of a questionnaire survey conducted at the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Humanities of Eötvös Loránd University during the remote learning period adopted as a response to the Covid–19 pandemic. The essay serves a number of different purposes: to present our experiences in this topic, to summarise the results, to set our own areas of development, and to share our observations with our teacher colleagues.

2. Digital education – phases and methodology

2.1. Our experience in education

Firstly, I would like to briefly outline the framework within which Anglofon Studio offers educational and complex foreign language services (interpretation, translation and special language training). The company employs specialists that are familiar with the technical language in the fields of law, banking, accounting, the European Union, environmental protection and energetics, and provides tailor-made trainings on subjects at the crossroads of business, law and communication. Its high-level and differentiated Legal English language courses are unique on the market. As an educational institution accredited by the Hungarian Bar Association,

it offers various courses to the legal community. The teaching activities of Anglofon Studio are centred around three main groups:

- Academic education: in this respect, we teach at several faculties of ELTE (Law and Humanities) – academic environment, courses integrated in a curriculum
- Private framework: educational activities offered through our own institution (Anglofon Studio) – typically evening courses, one-day or weekend trainings, e-learning courses
- Occasional trainings: tailor-made occasional trainings or training series at request – development of particular skills: letter writing in English, presentation of Anglo-Saxon legal institutions

We have been teaching terminology in the fields of law and economics at Eötvös Loránd University's Department of Translation and Interpreting since 2012, and at its Faculty of Law since 2016. In the academic educational setting we offer mainly terminology courses, whereas the courses held through our own institution, Anglofon Studio, focus on various other fields as well, from contract drafting to communication in the field of law or the development of other particular skills. To date, about 500 students have participated in our courses in academic settings, whereas around 1200 people attended courses organised by Anglofon Studio.

Educational materials developed by Anglofon Studio are being used by several other educational institutions for academic and language teaching purposes. To improve the effectiveness of contact hours, we have also developed an online digital teaching platform that we have been using since 2014 in courses for translator and interpreter trainees. We first introduced the platform as an experiment, and then began to use it with full functionality during remote learning introduced due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

2.2. Phases of the teaching process

First, I would like to analyse the teaching process. Dividing the process into four stages, I examine below how digital technology prevails in these phases, what specific challenges they present, and what opportunities each phase holds. The digital learning process is structured similarly to the traditional educational process, and the *Presentation – Practice – Production* (see, for example Ritchie, 2003) triple unit, which has long been known in language teaching, is supplemented with *interaction* based on IBM's four-tier educational model (Hidvégi 2003). Not all subjects contain all four elements, however, in most cases it is advisable to consider all elements when planning the teaching process and to implement them into the course.

2.2.1. Phase one – Presentation *of the educational material, alias Listen! See! Read!*

Goals: the teaching process usually begins with a presentation of the topic at hand. The teacher explains what is to be learned, provides information, while giving a comprehensive picture of the teaching material, and offering a pedagogical summary of the topic at hand, while also giving instructions to the students on how to master the given topic most effectively.

Teacher-student interaction: by default, this section is – traditionally – the "most passive" phase of digital education, at this point the emphasis is still on the elucidation of material, teacher-student communication is often one-sided. In academic settings, this step is traditionally implemented in the form of a lecture. In the case of digital education, material can be delivered in a variety of ways using digital devices. It is common practice for teachers to give an online lecture or to rely on pre-made materials, as the knowledge to be acquired can also be shared with the help of a pre-recorded video lecture or audio material. This can be supplemented or even completely replaced by presenting the subject with the help of written materials, readings, or by also using other tools such as figures, tables, info-graphic elements, process descriptions, etc.

Challenges: many believe that once this phase is completed, that is, the learning materials were presented or shared in written or even video form, digital education is accomplished. But this phase alone is not enough, the next two or three phases are also needed for students to master the subject. The biggest pitfall of this phase is monotony. We must strive to diversify the use of available tools, because these days, neither long lectures nor PDF documents consisting of many pages pass the stimulus threshold of the students sitting in front of the monitor.

Opportunities: contrary to popular belief, this phase does not necessarily have to consist of a one-way communication. In the Anglo-Saxon world, the pedagogical methodology of law universities adopted the so-called Socratic method, which is typically based on reasoning dialogues, raising questions, discussing problems and analysis and interpretation of (legal) cases in group (Aristotle's peripatetic, informal, group discussion method may be similar).

The question is, is this possible in the context of digital education?

As I see it, digital technology is not narrowing, but rather expanding our possibilities. The smartly built platform allows the development and application of a number of tools that can support and even implement the above process. One of the simplest ways of accomplishing this is to supplement the video lectures with quiz type exercises which allow the student to proceed to the next section only if the questions are answered correctly. Learning can also be effectively supported by the so-called flashcard features. By introducing interactive flashcards, interest-

ing facts and key information to be remembered can be highlighted in the learning materials. Boring text reading can also be made more interesting by adding interactive functions to the text, either by integrating a dictionary function or by highlighting, explaining and assigning additional content using html tools. Learning materials can be processed indirectly with the help of well-formulated, directed questions. The role of the teacher in such cases is to ask students questions, to make them think for themselves, and to point out the critical points of the subject matter.

2.2.2. Phase two – Practise the learning material, alias Try it out! Practice!

Goals: supporting the acquisition of the learning material and putting knowledge into practice by giving students tasks to be solved mostly independently. In most cases, an important element of practicing are the so-called drills, i.e. solving a large number of similar tasks (Bárdos 2000).

Teacher-student interaction: this step is certainly based on the activities of the students. Practice can be accomplished with the participation of the teacher during task-solving activities, on the one hand, or by completing the tasks given by the teacher in the form of independent learning, on the other hand.

Challenges: it is important to set the difficulty of the tasks so that they can be solved by everyone. At the same time, the tasks should not become monotonous, because it has the opposite effect on the learners.

Opportunities: we can easily incorporate digital technology into the practice phase through interactive tasks, making a large number of digital exercises available to the students to support the acquisition of knowledge. Drills are an integral part of any learning process, but students may find the sequence of identical tasks dull and tedious. The solution to this can be to differentiate between the difficulty levels as much as possible, as the learning materials should include easier and more difficult tasks. We provide feedback on the results of the tasks in the form of a matrix, from which participants can get an idea of their strengths and weaknesses in each area at each level. These tools automate the traditional teacher functions. The use of artificial intelligence can also take over the role of the teacher as a helper or supporter, giving much more space to individual, personalised skills development. Finally, the gamification of the learning material offers countless additional opportunities for the interactive sharing of knowledge.

2.2.3. Phase three – Interaction: *Listen and see how others do it!*

Goals: joint processing of the learned and practised material by also involving the other members of the group, or group work, during which the participant receives feedback from other students or the teacher, and can compare their own progress

and results with others, while also assessing what others are better at and trying to overcome their shortcomings.

Teacher-student interaction: it is an interactive part of digital education, the participation of the teacher is definitely useful, although students can also learn a lot from each other.

Challenges: not everyone likes to expose themselves, therefore students should be given the possibility to stay anonymous, so that less extroverted participants and students who feel insecure are also given an opportunity to safely participate in this phase. Care should also be taken to ensure balance within groups should someone have a huge head start in a field.

Opportunities: in the case of online education, practising can be done in the form of live online lessons (such as holding a seminar in a video conference), consultation occasions, or even group forums. Various applications can be used for collaboration, such as chats, teams, virtual classrooms, communicating with the teacher online. These techniques help students learn from the shared experiences in groups.

As discussed above, in an optimal situation, lecturing can be supplemented or entirely replaced by discussing and analysing the educational material in the form of questions and answers. In addition to these, there are a number of interactive digital tools available, all of which are designed to engage students. For this purpose, Anglofon Studio has developed an application called *Comparative Writing*, which displays the written material submitted by each student (which can be answers to an open question, translations, compositions, rewordings etc.) on one screen and allows targeted feedback to be sent electronically.

2.2.4. Phase four – Production: *Evaluate by putting it into practice!*

Goals: evaluating, checking the acquisition of knowledge, giving assignments, testing, examining, and using what has been learned in a live environment.

Teacher-student interaction: this step is based on the student's activity, the teacher's task is limited to correcting and giving feedback, however, in an optimal situation, this task can be automated.

Challenges: it is very important that the exam draws from the range of tasks that the students have practised and that the difficulty level of the final test is accurately calibrated. Marking exams and administering exam results can be very time consuming if the platform does not provide an auto-correction feature or sufficient integration. Any mistakes made during the examination are poorly received by students, so special attention must be paid to accuracy.

Opportunities: examination is typically highly digitalisable in the form of electronic exams, the improvement of which can be fully or largely automated, depending on the type of exam. This is the element that is easiest to implement in digital education as plenty of platforms offer testing options.

3. The integrated digital teaching platform

Since 2014 I have been using digital tools in law and business language education courses with the help of an integrated platform developed by Anglofon Studio. First, I experimented with third-party tools that were available to anyone on the market, but the multitude of different applications posed a number of problems: each application performed only a subtask of the whole educational process, there was no interoperability between them, and the multitude of applications available overall became a burden. This is why we set out to develop our own educational platform.

Our goal was to create an integrated digital e-learning interface where we could store texts, videos and audio materials needed for the presentation of the subject-matter, as well as tasks and tests needed for practice and accountability, while also providing means of communication with students (forum and video conferences), while having the system track and log students 'activities and results in the background. In connection with the design of the platform, our experience reveals that the possibility of system integration is very important. If we work on separate platforms, the benefits of using each element of digital education do not add up, therefore, the efficiency of the whole education process is lower, whereas the workload of teachers is high.

The integrated digital education platform is comprised of more than the usual features of traditional education frameworks. It is an intelligent educational system that is complemented by the integration of a learning management system and all the necessary digital tools for educational purposes, providing in itself an interface for every step and aspect of learning, without the necessity to use any external resources. Its features can be summarised as follows:

- integrated
  The application can be fully integrated into the educational process; it tracks and supports the course of traditional education with a number of tools, handling the exclusively distance learning process in a similar manner. The elements of the system are connected to each other, an output created at any point serves as an input at a logically connected place.
- automated
  In the case of a purely e-learning course, everything happens automatically, the process does not require any additional human intervention. Pre-set automatisms can serve as support for traditional education as well.

- intelligent
  The application uses elements of artificial intelligence wherever possible.
- structured
  The system provides a framework for the structured development of the e-learning curriculum, on the one hand encouraging teachers to structure the material as much as possible, and on the other hand providing a structure that is easy for participants to follow.
- measurable
  All activities performed in the application are fully measurable and the results of the measurements are immediately used by the system in order to increase efficiency.
- self-developing
  The system requests feedback from users at various stages and then integrates the incoming feedback in the system.
- dynamic
  The system uploads e-learning content from databases, as a result, the content can be improved by expanding the database. However, if required, learning materials can be retrieved at any point, i.e. the system captures a given current state of the dynamic content and provides it as static content.
- web-based
  The web-based solution provides full compatibility with all operating systems and browsers and does not include flash or other elements dependent on third-parties.

4. Creating a teaching platform

In the following, I will talk about how to create an integrated digital teaching platform, giving details about how to structure the curriculum in lessons and how to compile the syllabus from these lessons. For this, I found it useful to conceptually define each element:

Table 1.
Defining the structural elements of a digital teaching platform

curriculum	It is a list of educational steps that shows how the teaching activity is structured, what topics are to be covered, how much time is to be spent on them, in which order and with what tools this is to be realised.
syllabus	It is the organisation of the teaching materials defined by the curriculum into larger units, which contain the topics of the subject-matter and their order. The syllabus usually covers the material of one semester.

lesson	The smallest unit of the educational process, which either takes place without interruption in a classroom setting with the participation of a teacher, or is an e-learning unit with individual steps designed for individual learning, also called an e-lesson.

4.1. Creating digital educational materials

In the following, I will deal with the topics of how to digitally map a traditional lesson, what challenges and opportunities this process entails, and how to turn challenges arising into benefits. These all depend primarily on the degree to which curricula and educational activities can be digitalised. Under digitalisability we understand that the computer is able to process the submitted tasks directly (either in real time or with a delay) without the intervention of a teacher. In other words, it raises the question of whether a given activity can be fully translated into binary code. Can the machine play the role of a teacher in teaching? In this respect, learning materials can be divided into two categories:

1. Digitalisable content
   In many cases, the teacher's activities can be digitalised. Where possible, it is advisable to extend its use. The use of digital tools can also be realised in traditional educational settings. The range of digital exercises is wide: there are quiz-type tests, multiple choice tasks with one or multiple answers, true or false tests, or even text-filling, matching, queuing, etc. tasks, flashcard functions with simple or interactive content, or any other digital tool which can serve an educational purpose.

2. Hardly- or non-digitalisable content
   This includes any educational material or classroom activity where the feedback of the teacher (either in real-time or delayed) is essential in the learning process. We can further distinguish two groups:
   – An activity that is labeled as a result of joint processing and thus can be converted into digital material by the teacher. This can be a very good resource for creating a sufficient number of samples, and by categorising them, we can enable artificial intelligence to compile learning materials independently. The way to achieve this will be discussed later.
   – There will always be activities that cannot be digitalised, therefore, these will fall under the scope of the teacher's work. In the following sections, we will look at how to make the presence of the teacher felt in digital environments and how to minimise live work while using digital devices.

It is important to emphasise that artificial intelligence only works if it has access to a properly structured database. Therefore, it is an important requirement for

educational content create tagged and leveled based on a predefined database structure. This is a prerequisite for being able to put artificial intelligence at the service of learning.

4.2. Creating a digital syllabus

In the previous subsection, we reviewed the digital education toolkit and now we will take a step further. I suggested that the teacher should try to find ways to create digital learning material that support traditional education. Let's look at how large amounts of digital content can be incorporated into the educational process in an optimal situation. There can be several ways of accomplishing this:

1. Creating a digital syllabus
   It is obvious and reasonable that, relying on the existing digital toolkit, the digital curriculum should be put together in a similar way to the traditional curriculum, linking each digital content one after the other. Thus, students are placed on a path on which they complete a specified type and prescribed number of tasks, and as a result, assimilate the learning material.

2. Compiling dynamic learning materials from the digital toolkit
   Sometimes we cannot determine exactly our starting point (what is the pre-course level) and the goal we want to achieve (the post-course level), which can also stem from the different levels of competence of the participants. In this case, with the help of appropriate measurements, we can accurately determine the initial state, and with the help of the toolkit we can compile – like choosing from a restaurant menu – a curriculum package that covers the development of the skills needed to reach the output level.

3. Incorporating artificial intelligence in curriculum development
   At this point we can let our imagination run wild. What if we entrusted the computer also with the compilation of the curriculum? Is it possible that the machine can also create a curriculum, or does this belong to a still very distant future? Is human (teacher) intelligence absolutely necessary at this point to ensure that the output level is reached?

The machine can only compile a package from the content that we have fed it. If we can create measurement tools that are suitable for assessing students' competence as accurately as possible, and the system includes learning materials suitable for the appropriate level of development of each skill at the given levels, then, from these data, an e-learning educational framework is able to compile the curriculum independently using artificial intelligence. To put it simply, if the machine knows what kind of mistakes a student tends to make, it can assemble the learning materials that are appropriate for the purpose. It is essential for the adequate operation

of artificial intelligence that the individual elements are entered into a specific database, as the machine will be able to process the entered data independently using appropriate algorithms. The machine can reduce teacher haste and disorganisation. Following a given structure guides the teacher's hand.

4.3. Artificial intelligence in digital education

The next step is to analyse how we can apply artificial intelligence in digital education. The machine is not able to perform creative activity on its own, it works only on the basis of algorithms and uploaded data, therefore, the following conditions must be met for the application of artificial intelligence:

1. a sufficient number of digital educational elements must be available;
2. the tasks must be properly coded and labeled, i.e. the system must be able to select the tasks to be used based on specified criteria;
3. the data required for the tasks are uploaded to a database capable of handling an appropriate algorithm.

The digital world thinks in categories, abstract problems, encodes, labels, organises, and stores data in a structured way. Therefore, the tools used in digital education must also be built on this pattern. All of this requires accurate pre-course level assessments and plenty of periodic measurements which scan knowledge using available diagnostic tools and point to critical points, so that the machine can compile a syllabus and create personalised development programs. An integral part of the process is the categorisation and coding of errors, the preparation of tasks to correct these errors, and then their assignment to the codes. In this way, it is possible for the platform to act as an automatic learning tool with the help of artificial intelligence, and to assemble an individual package for the targeted development of underdeveloped skills.

To improve the effectiveness of contact hours, Anglofon Studio – bearing in mind the principles and methodological considerations set out above – has developed an artificial intelligence based online digital teaching platform that we have been using since 2014 in courses for translator and interpreter trainees. We introduced the platform as an experiment and then started fully using it in remote learning settings during the Covid-19 pandemic. This situation allowed us to assess the effectiveness of the system and draw conclusions based on the results.

4.4. The role of teachers in digital education

In the previous section, while discussing the possibility of applying artificial intelligence in education we also pointed out that an artificial intelligence based platform is able to function independently in the educational process under appropriate circumstances. And if, with the help of artificial intelligence, a digital platform can

perform educational tasks, what is left for teachers to do? Can digital technology fully replace them in their role, or does some kind of creative activity remain for teachers? Do teachers have to worry that once they have fed all their knowledge into the digital teaching platform, they will be left without a job? If not, what is the role of a teacher when using an integrated and automated digital teaching platform? In the digital age, these are very relevant issues.

Digitally processing learning materials is a multifaceted, lengthy and complex task, which requires a lot of work on the part of teachers (see Pym et al. 2003). If we look at the digitalisation of a one-time course, the effort invested will not pay off at all. If we consider digitalisation, we must plan for the long term and at the level of the whole system. It is advisable to structure digital education in such a way that the whole material consists of smaller modules (Bereczki et al, 2020), so that later it can be easily adapted to different needs. Digitalising tasks is definitely a big investment in terms of work on the part of the teacher, however, this pays off well when the elements can be used over and over again.

There are two requirements for the process of digitalising materials. In section 4.2 I described the process of preparing a syllabus. It is important that each element fits well into the syllabus. On the one hand, tasks developed based on spontaneous ideas can be very good, in fact, creative novelties make the learning materials interesting, but these cannot deviate from the original plans outlined in the syllabus. Therefore, compiling digital content can also be initiated with the development and application of one module at a time, however, it is important to keep in mind how each module will fit into the syllabus. The other aspect of the digitalisation process is that artificial intelligence can only handle coded and tagged content, therefore, new learning materials should be developed bearing this in mind, because this process is always more labour-intensive and cumbersome afterwards, than building a data structure from the start. Even beyond accomplishing that, the tasks and possibilities of teachers have not been exhausted.

One of the pillars of my teaching experience that I accumulated over decades is the good teacher-student relationship. A digital platform based on artificial intelligence can replace many communication related activities, as students regularly receive timed letters with relevant content that they see as a personal connection, even if they know that the content received was not spontaneously written. The automated system builds a continuous, albeit basic, relationship with the students. In addition to this, of course, personal interaction between participants is useful and necessary at many stages of learning, and students also need it (see Robin 2021). The majority of students like to learn by having a teacher at the end of the process who helps them understand the learning materials, answers their questions, encourages and motivates them, provides support to overcome difficulties (Tartsayné Németh 2012), and finally, whose recognition is earned by students through knowledge and who evaluates students' performance with good marks. This fundamentally underpins the need for a teacher in the educational process.

Teacher involvement can also take the form of ensuring the establishment of links between the digital tools used, thus, the data entered in one system is also valid when using another function and as a result, the benefits of using the devices are accumulating. For example, it is useful to sort, group and code the phenomena (errors) identified during the assessment of submitted materials, and to draw ideas from the submitted materials in order to achieve the development directions that have emerged. This works the same way for any oral skills development, in the case of which the teacher's observations should be used as input to enhance skills development exercises. If this process works as intended, students will be given relevant tasks to correct the mistakes they made. If this iterative process becomes systemic, the feedback will be built into digital learning materials in a structured way, and as a result, we achieve digital education supported by artificial intelligence.

Based on the information above, it may seem that the role of the teacher is pushed into the background, and the teacher is no longer present throughout the digital education process. The question is, what will the teacher do if the digitalisation process reaches a point at which it is no longer necessary to work on digitalisation? I think that once we arrive at this point, teachers will be able to rely on a powerful digital resource and return to their original profession, that is, devote their time to supporting students, paying attention to each and every student in person. The digital toolkit works as a well-oiled machine in the background, and teachers can devote their time to those things which make children dream of becoming teachers: to encourage and support students, to answer questions that arise and devote all their attention to catering to individual needs. At a system level, the time spent presenting the learning materials will be reduced considerably, and the time saved (which teachers would have originally intended to spend on presenting the materials) can be allocated for either personalised or small group consultations. This extra attention can be far more valuable and effective for students than listening to a lecture, which can be just as effective in the form of a pre-recorded video, especially if the video presentation is complemented by interactive digital content.

5. The survey

We have been using the integrated digital teaching platform developed by Anglofon Studio for seven years during the legal terminology courses we offer at Eötvös Loránd University. In the remote learning period, which was introduced due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we taught several groups at ELTE's Faculty of Humanities and Faculty of Law with the platform: students in in-person and distance learning environments. Law students and students of humanities used the same integrated platform for learning purposes.[1] We teach legal terminology in both faculties,

[1] The e-learning tools and elements of Anglofon studio's digital teaching platform are listed here: https://anglofon.com/e-learning-tools

however, the contents of the courses are somewhat different in the two groups depending on the needs of the students and the kind of information they will need in their career later on.

Students who participate in legal education, as well as students in interpreting training, take the course entitled *Introduction to Legal Terminology,* because these students need to develop a comprehensive understanding of numerous legal fields. The contents of the course cover various fields of law: first, there is a general introduction to the terminology of legal systems, fields of law and the legal profession, then the terminology of international law and the areas of private law are discussed. In the lessons, we devote special attention to matters that are easy to confuse or where there is an increased need for clarification. We offer law students an overview in English on the terms and concepts they study in their university courses, which in turn lays the necessary foundations for them to participate in learning programmes abroad, for example, in the Erasmus Programme. Interpreters acquire comprehensive legal knowledge that can be later utilised as part of their day-to-day work.

Table 2
The syllabus of the subject *Introduction to Legal Terminology*

1. **Legal systems**: Basic legal concepts in English. Introduction to the Anglo-American legal system, The difference between civil law and common law.
2. **Legal fields**: Explanation of the fields primarily in the civil law system. You will learn what each field covers and see examples for the practice areas. In addition, you will also understand the different sources of laws.
3. **Legal practice:** Introduction to the terms used in legal practice. You will find lots of information regarding the legal profession in general, as well as legal education in civil and common law countries.
4. **Constitutional law**: We will learn the English terms related to the constitutional system, election system and fundamental rights. You will also find detailed information regarding the three branches of power.
5. **Criminal law**: Overview of the most common terms related to crime and criminal procedure, focusing on some theoretical issues, followed by crimes against persons, property, as well as an introduction to criminal procedure.
6. **Law of procedure**: Overview of the most common terms related to crime and criminal procedure, focusing on some theoretical issues, followed by crimes against persons, property, as well as an introduction to criminal procedure.
7. **International law**: Introduction to the basic concepts of international law, the history, sources and basic concepts. Terms related to the states, seas and airspace, as well as human rights.
8. **EU law**: Basic terms related to the European Union, starting from its history, followed by the most important bodies, such as the Commission, the Parliament and the Council.

9. **Law of Contracts**: Basic concepts of contract law, starting from the life of a contract, from formation throug to the termination of the contract, including all relevant aspects of performance or the failure thereof, as well as the consequences. at.
10. **Contracts and parties:** A detailed collection of the contracts most frequently used in everyday transactions, including the short description of their subjects, the parties thereto, in the field of property sales, services, work and financial transactions.
11. **Model contract**: Detailed analysis of a model contract for services, with instructions regarding the structure of the contract, explanation of the legal terminology, as well as the presentation of the typical legal phraseology of contracts.
12. **Final test**: a test of the materials acquired during the year and the evaluation of the results.

Translation trainees participate in a course entitled *Introduction to the Terminology of Contracts.* Translation trainees will mainly work with written texts in an English–Hungarian (and other) language combination; therefore, in their case, the phraseology of contracts formed the backbone of the educational material, because based on my experience, legal translators are very often commissioned to translate contracts. In this field, there are many pitfalls that translators have to avoid and without the necessary information, their work is doomed to failure. Due to this, our goal was to familiarise students with the contracts that lawyers draft the most frequently (sales and lease contract, agency and contracting agreement, employment contract) and to teach them the most important terms, collocations and glossaries related to these contracts.

Table 3
The syllabus of the subject *Introduction to the Terminology of Contracts*

1. **Course introduction, introduction to sales contracts:** General information about the course, Introduction to sales transactions, with a focus on the difference between legal systems.
2. **Phraseology of sales contracts:** Detailed analysis of a sales contract, general information about the key elements of English language contracts.
3. **Introduction to lease contracts:** Understanding the terminology of a sales contract and several other important issues in contracts in general.
4. **Introduction to contracting agreements:** This session gives you an insight into the structure of Anglo-American contracts and an understanding of the contracts for work in general.
5. **Introduction to agency contracts:** We learn about agency contracts and practise several aspects of contract drafting from a more general approach.
6. **Revision of contracts for work and services:** structured review of the terminology and phraseology of contracts for works and services.

7. **Introduction to employment contracts:** The employment contract is not only about the terminology of the field but other important skills that you can use in all kinds of contracts.
8. **Phraseology of employment contracts:** Further study of the employment contract, combined with a review of several practical issues used in contract drafting.
9. **Introduction to business associations:** Introduction to business associations. Explanation of the most frequently used terms in the subject.
10. **Phraseology of the articles of association:** An insight into the law of business association from a broad perspective, followed by a detailed analysis of the terminology.
11. **Revision of the terminology of business associations:** Structured review of the materials learnt during this course.
12. **Final test**: A test of the materials acquired during the year and the evaluation of the results.

5.1. Correlation analysis to measure the effectiveness of the platform

In order to measure the effectiveness of the integrated digital education platform, as a first step we performed a statistical correlation analysis, and in this case, the platform's analytical data provided us information; while the second part of the analysis is based on a questionnaire filled out by students from ELTE. Correlation analysis is a mathematical (statistical) tool that shows the strength and direction of the relationship between two values. We performed correlation analysis in order to explore the extent to which the activity on the digital education platform is related to the learning outcomes of students.

In our analysis, two separate statistical samples were examined: the first is a 32-hour Legal English course organised independently of university education by Anglofon Studio. This is traditional classroom teaching with digital "homework" after the classes that focus on the same topic, while the other sample contains the results of a 24-hour university course that was offered only in a digital format due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In the first case, we examined the relationship between the activity on the digital platform and the progress of students by analysing the collected data from 50 participants. In the second case, we had a sample size of 110 people. In both cases, first, we present the data from our analysis on a graph, and then the results are discussed.

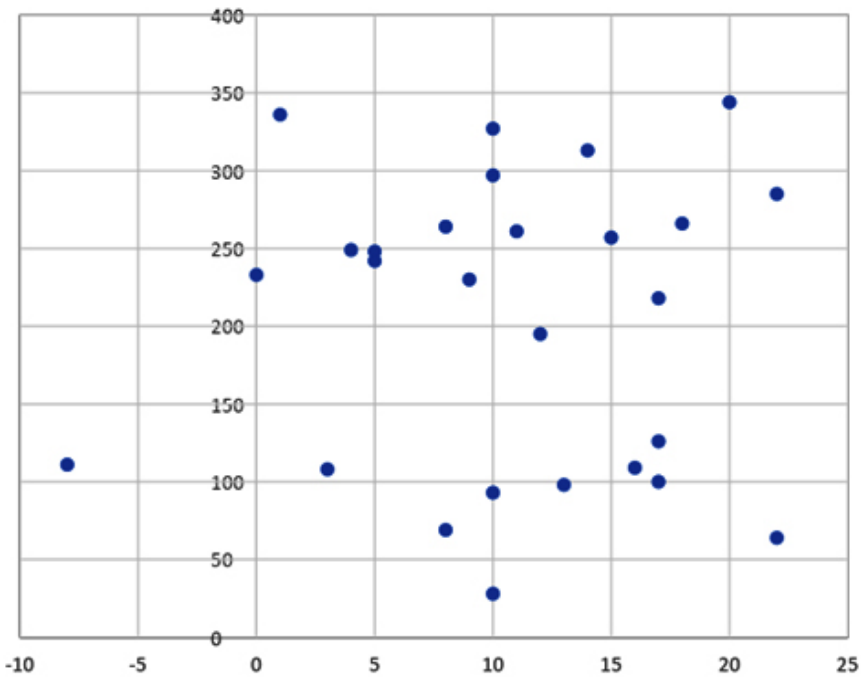
5.1.1. The relationship between being an active user on the platform and showing progress – first group

The diagram below depicts the relationship between the activity on the digital teaching platform and the progress of students. The vertical axis represents the number of page downloads. This piece of data is the best indicator to look at if we

want to assess the activity of students on the digital platform, the effort they made to learn the material. (We could have worked with the aggregate value of the time spent on the webpage, however, this number would have also included the time when someone left the course page open but did something else on the computer while it was still active. Whenever this happens, the computer still considers the time that has passed since the last opening of the page as active time on the web-page for a certain additional period). The horizontal axis indicates the progress of students expressed as percentages based on the difference between their pre-course and post-course test results.

The group in question participated in a 32-hour training and they were given e-learning tasks in addition to classroom teaching. With the correlation analysis, we want to investigate the extent to which the more active use of the platform facilitates the learning outcomes. Do students who use the digital teaching platform more extensively have a better understanding of the course material? The points represent the students in the course and their results on the basis of their user activity.

Figure 1
Activity on the platform and the progress of students



If the relationship between these two factors was linear, the points would form a straight line whose starting point would be the origin where the two axes intersect, consequently, this would mean that the more each student learns, the better they perform. However, this is not the case. If we take a closer look at the graph, we can see that the points formed two groups (statistical population). The group on the upper part of the diagram represents the students who studied a lot, relatively, and as a result, they performed better by 10 percentage points on average. The population in the lower section of the diagram shows those students who studied less actively, and yet, they also performed significantly better.

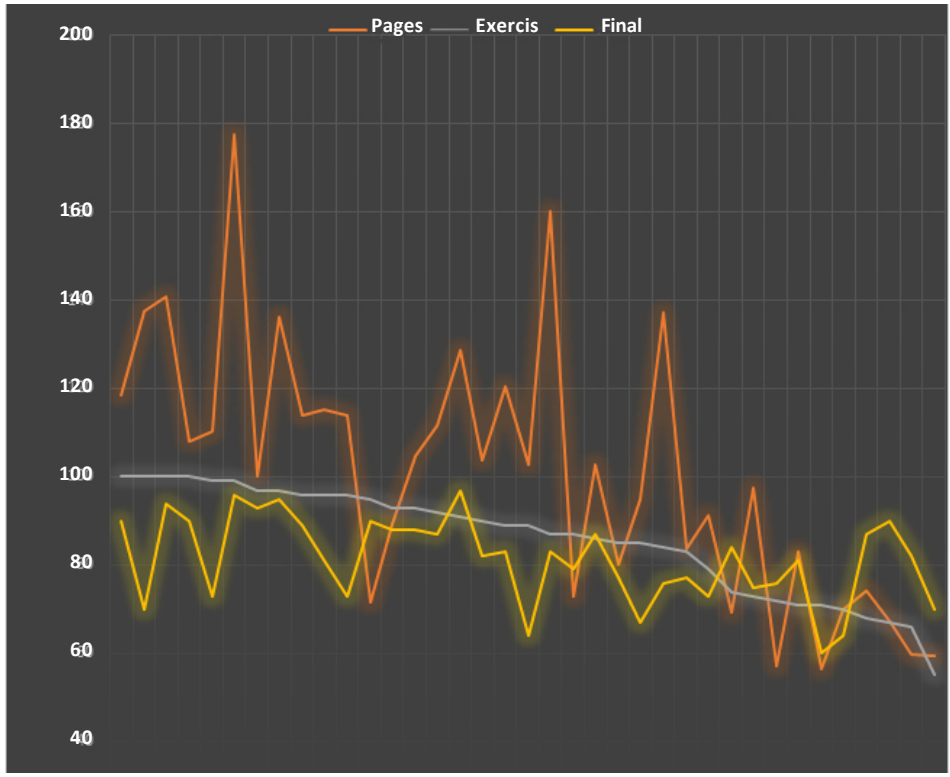
These results show that the students fall into two categories. On the one hand, around two thirds of the students achieve varying degrees of progress that is nevertheless significant, because they study intensively (they are active users of the platform). The knowledge of the other population has also increased substantially, however, this progress cannot be attributed to the use of the platform (but most certainly to the fact that the students participated in the course). It can be consequently stated that the use of the platform contributed to the progress of the majority of the students (two thirds). That said, this statement might lose some of its strength because of the population that also improved a lot but not as a result of the digital teaching platform.

By contrast, the second group (discussed in detail in the next section) only participated in very few in-person classes; therefore, the impact of this factor is almost negligible here. This in turn means that we can explore our question – to what extent does the active use of the digital teaching platform contribute to the learning outcome of students? – much more accurately.

5.1.2. The relationship between being an active user on the platform and showing progress – second group

In our second analysis, we compare the semester's user activity on the digital teaching platform with the task results of the semester and the results of the end-term test. The group in question suddenly had to switch to remote learning in the semester of the Covid-19 outbreak, and since we collected the data during this period, it is possible to rule out the impact of in-person teaching almost completely. In the larger part of the semester, no in-person teaching was possible, therefore, students studied exclusively with the help of the digital teaching platform. In this case, we wanted to examine the extent to which the platform facilitates the learning process. Thus, we also investigated whether students who used it more extensively performed better than those who did not use the opportunities the platform had to offer.

Figure 2
The relationship between the activity on the platform and the results of students



On the graph above, the red line indicates the activity of students on the platform and the yellow line the results of the exam. In contrast with the previous graph, this one also takes the results of each lesson into account. In the previous group, digital lessons were optional tasks, in this group, however, the results of the submitted tasks were counted towards the final grade. The results are ranked based on the dispersion of the data in the exercises that students completed in the semester. The respective position of the yellow and red lines confirms the strong correlation between activity and performance, with the exception of a few students (where the red line is under the yellow line). Now, we can come to the conclusion that the more actively students use the digital teaching platform, the better they perform in the exam, in other words, they become more familiar with the course material. The relationship between the two factors is, however, different on the right-hand side of the diagram, since in the case of the last quarter of the students, the correlation between the two factors does not exist anymore. These students performed poorly on the tests during the semester, which can naturally be attributed to the fact that they used the platform less actively.

It is interesting, however, that some students did not perform worse because of that, quite the contrary. For the last 10 percent of the students, the correlation does not hold up, in fact, just the opposite is true: some students did well in the end-term exam despite barely participating in digital education. This might be due to several reasons: they might have had more thorough knowledge when the course started, or they might have used traditional learning methods and studied enough for the exam that way, but they did not use the exercises on the platform to practise. In their case, it cannot be stated that there is a correlation between the amount of learning on the digital platform and the exam results. In my interpretation, this result shows that the advantages offered through the platform are not well-received by this group, they do not react positively – I call them "reluctant users" when it comes to digital learning. I am happy to ascertain though, that the proportion of these students is low, especially since previously, 30-40 percent of the students seemed to resist digital education, as revealed by our surveys five years ago. This means that the reluctance to accept digital learning environments has decreased, which is a step forward. On the one hand, this can be attributed to general trends, and hopefully, on the other hand, the educational materials of Anglofon Studio and our service have contributed to the increased willingness to accept digital learning.

5.2. Questionnaire

During the remote learning period that was introduced due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we used the digital teaching platform of Anglofon Studio to teach at ELTE's two faculties during the semester. After the end of the semester, we conducted a survey with the help of a questionnaire. We asked around 200 students to assess the course, and 110 out of these students gave us detailed feedback on the course materials and the digital teaching platform. The questionnaire served two purposes. On the one hand, we wanted to get a clear idea of students' attitudes towards the educational materials that are embedded in a digital teaching platform, and on the other hand, based on their feedback, we wanted to identify the areas where we had to improve our service.

At the end of the semester, we sent out a questionnaire to the students who participated in digital distance learning during the remote learning period. We inquired about their user experiences and the effectiveness of our system. The primary goal was to find out what students think of the digital teaching platform, how much they like using it, and whether they think that digital education on an e-learning platform is of the same quality as in-person teaching. Furthermore, there were questions on the topics themselves, how useful each one was for the students, because based on their feedback, we sometimes make changes. Occasionally, we take out the least favourite topics and replace them with topics in which the students are more interested, especially if the course material has not been completely finalised.

We asked around 200 students to assess the course, and 110 of these students sent back their answers, which means that we analysed 110 questionnaires. We analysed the feedback of active users separately as well. We assumed that active users will have a more complete understanding of the platform and of its use, they will identify the advantages and disadvantages more readily, therefore, their opinion might differ from that of other students. However, this assumption was only partly correct. In the following sections, the answers to the questionnaire are presented and analysed question by question. In addition to the below listed topics, there were questions in the questionnaire that addressed the technical features of the platform (registration, speed, tools and scoring); however, these are not relevant information when the effectiveness of digital course materials are assessed. Therefore, these are not included in the results we present below. At the end of the questionnaire, students had the chance to share their thoughts with us and give us feedback or write us remarks that they considered relevant and useful connected to the topic.

5.2.1. Personal attitude

The questionnaire first explored the personal attitude of the participants, in other words, whether they liked spending time with the tasks on the digital teaching platform. The answers to our questions are shown in Table 4.

Table 4
The personal attitude of participants towards the digital platform

All students	yes	78 %
	no	22 %
Active users	yes	82 %
	no	18 %

Evidently, those students used the system more actively who liked the idea of digital learning, used the platform willingly and liked the e-learning exercises. We were happy to conclude that the majority of the students belong to this category. It is interesting to see that 18 percent of the active users had a negative attitude towards the digital teaching platform; therefore, it must be due to their discipline that in spite of this negative attitude, they continued to work on the tasks in a digital learning environment.

We were interested in the cause of this negative attitude, therefore, we asked the students who replied with ‘no’ why they did not like doing these e-learning tasks. Some students were not interested in the topics connected to legal fields, thus these answers were not relevant for our purposes, because they did not include

information that could serve as a stepping stone for us to further improve the platform. The feedback of other participants can be grouped into three categories of roughly the same size: 1. I do not like digital learning; 2. I do not like distance learning; 3. I had technical difficulties. I think that these answers show the aversion of these students to digital teaching platforms and in general to distance learning – they are the reluctant users. One of the primary goals for developing the platform and creating the course materials is to win students over and convince them to accept digital education. However, it might happen that in spite of our endeavours, some people will continue to harbour reservations towards the digital world.

In 2015, we conducted a similar survey and asked the participants how much they liked doing the e-learning tasks. 5 years ago, around 34 percent of the students had a positive attitude. This shows that the number of students who are reluctant to accept digital education has fallen nearly by half: compared to the previous 34 percent, only 17 percent of the participants voiced their reservations concerning the platform this year. This might be due to the fact that the Covid-19 pandemic forced everybody to use these tools or because digital technology has become more widely used. Nevertheless, we still have to face the fact that one out of six students does not study willingly in a digital learning environment, therefore, we have to work on methods that help us win these students over. In the following sections, I come up with concrete suggestions and list some of the steps we plan to take in order to achieve this.

5.2.2. Equivalence

In the questionnaire, students were asked whether they considered the quality of digital education the same as that of in-person teaching. The answers were the following:

Table 5
Equivalence of education on a digital platform and in person

All students	yes	37 %
	approximately	45 %
	no	18 %
Active users	yes	39 %
	approximately	45 %
	no	16 %

The answers suggest that 37 percent of the students found the digital learning environment and in-person teaching equivalent, 45 percent approximately equivalent;

however, 18 percent did not agree with this statement. The active users of the platform showed acceptance to a higher degree: roughly the same number of participants considered the two learning environments equivalent as those who said that they were approximately equivalent; therefore, in their case, even fewer participants rejected the platform. In this case, the same conclusion can be re-stated that around one sixth of the students are reluctant to use the digital teaching platform. The opinion of the active users is especially relevant, as they expressed their thoughts after being highly engaged members of the course. Consequently, they certainly cannot be accused of showing passive resistance to digital education.

5.2.3. Usefulness

We inquired about the thoughts of students on the usefulness of the digital educational material. The answers are presented separately in the case of active users once again. The answers are shown in Table 6.

Table 6
The usefulness of the digital teaching platform

All students	yes	51 %
	approximately	47 %
	no	2 %
Active users	yes	60 %
	approximately	40 %
	no	0 %

We were happy to conclude that the majority of students found the learning process on a digital teaching platform useful or at least approximately useful. It should be underlined that all active users evaluated our work positively from the point of view of usefulness. Now, it proves to be valuable that we differentiated between average and active users. Only 2 percent of the students (2 out of a sample consisting of 110 people) expressed their doubts about the usefulness of the platform, and these participants used the platform to a very small extent. As the platforms keep logs on the activities of the users, individual progress can be tracked, therefore, it was important to find out more about the two negative opinions. One of the two students in question is a visually impaired person who received materials separately as pdf files. Fortunately, there is a function on the platform that enables us to convert the entire course material to pdf, thereby visually impaired people can also access the content of the course with the help of text to speech software. The other person had relatively deep prior knowledge, but did not spend time on the materials, however,

due to prior knowledge, this person was also able to pass the course with satisfactory results. In the questionnaire, the person in question claimed to have no interest in the legal field.

5.2.4. Preparing students for the end-term test

One of the most important and clearest indicators of a course's success is students' results on the end-term test. We asked the students who participated in the survey whether they considered the course material of the digital teaching platform and its methodology useful to prepare for the end-term test. The respondents clearly thought so and gave a positive response to the question, as can be seen from the data in the table below.

Table 7
The usefulness of the digital teaching platform to prepare students for the exam

All students	yes	68 %
	approximately	31 %
	no	1 %
Active users	yes	68 %
	approximately	32 %
	no	0 %

We were happy to conclude that nearly all reluctant users unanimously agreed that the exercises prepared them for the end-term test properly. Based on this result, we can ascertain that the module of the platform that randomly generates a test for each student from the exercises of the semester has proved to be successful. Based on the feedback, we have to be careful in future not to include questions in the test that can only be interpreted in context, because in the test one question comes after the other, thus no question should be included that refers back to a given context.

5.2.5. User experience

We wanted to offer the students a large amount of information in every lesson; therefore, it was important to ask about their user experience, whether they found the platform user-friendly. The answers of the students are shown in Table 8.

Table 8
The user-friendliness of the digital teaching platform

All students	yes	50 %
	approximately	40 %
	no	10 %
Active users	yes	60 %
	approximately	29 %
	no	11 %

Based on the results, our impression is that there is still room for improvement in this regard. For the next semester, we prepared very detailed instructions for the platform to help students and to answer virtually all the questions in advance that otherwise might arise. We also plan to record tutorials, and in these videos, it will be explained how to use the digital platform. This is important because explicit instructions and explanations facilitate successful education in an e-learning environment (Pym et al. 2003; Bereczki et al. 2020).

5.2.6. Popularity of the topics

We wanted to know which topics were popular and less popular among students. Although we decided on the current topics included in the course after careful consideration, certain topics sometimes do not fit in with the others, and in these cases, we are willing to update the contents of the course and replace a topic with another. In the case of the legal terminology course, our goal was to keep the balance between general and more specific descriptions and similarly between public and private law.

A note on methodology: every respondent had the chance to mention one topic as a positive and one as a negative example, because our goal was to keep the questionnaire as simple as possible. Naturally, a more sophisticated investigation could have been performed if we had asked the students to rank the topics on the basis of popularity, how much they liked each of them. However, we thought that the most important factor was to keep it simple to receive as many responses as possible, and to have a questionnaire as representative as possible even at the cost of precision. In any case, a strong preference can be seen on the basis of the answers. To make the analysis easier, we applied the following method: we added the number of positive and negative instances (when a topic was mentioned in an answer), thereby assigning scores to them; the results are presented in Table 9.

Table 9
Popularity of the topics among students

	most popular topic	least popular topic	evaluation
legal systems	4	3	1
fields of law	4	5	-1
legal profession	5	3	2
constitutional law	6	9	-3
criminal law	15	7	8
procedural law	6	8	-2
international law	7	3	4
EU law	8	16	-8
law of contracts	16	6	10
types of contracts	6	13	-7
sample contract	6	11	-6

The answers suggest that the most popular topics were the law of contracts, criminal law and international law, in that order. Of the most popular topics, those that stood out from the rest in particular were those in which the educational material had close connections to our everyday lives. We teach students who do not have extensive prior knowledge in the legal topics of the course, therefore, during the learning process, they rely on information that they have already obtained from different sources. Many students have a certain level of knowledge from a few fields of law, either because of their everyday experiences or through the media. It is interesting that the law of contracts and criminal law were so popular, and this might be due to the fact that students had prior knowledge in these fields from the above mentioned sources. Therefore, it is a good strategy to try to rely on the prior knowledge of students or on small pieces of information the students are aware of, because this way students have a direct connection to the topic, which is a good starting point for their learning process.

We also analysed the educational materials of the popular topics from a different perspective, namely from the point of view of their structure, how the material was organised in the given lessons. There are lessons in which the theoretical material is discussed as a part of one task, but other lessons have a different structure: first comes the theoretical introduction to a sub-field of law, and directly after that there are tasks connected to the given topic. Two out of the three most popular topics – law of contracts and international law – follow the latter approach. Thus,

it can be concluded that this learning structure is more enjoyable for students. It is better to divide the sub-fields and share the information with the students in separate sections than to share everything with them at the beginning. The individual feedback from the students confirms this assumption.

Table 10
Popularity of the topics among active users

	most popular topic	**least popular topic**	**evaluation**
legal systems	1	2	-1
fields of law	2	1	1
legal profession	2	2	0
constitutional law	2	3	-1
criminal law	4	2	2
procedural law	3	4	-1
international law	3		3
EU law	3	4	-1
law of contracts	4	1	3
types of contracts	0	4	-4
sample contract	3	4	-1

We put special emphasis on the opinion of active users concerning the popularity of the topics, as they can form a more informed opinion of the topics, using the platform more frequently and familiarising themselves with the educational material in more detail. The results are the same in their case as well, albeit the order of the topics is somewhat different (they like international law a bit more than criminal law), but there are no other differences.

We wanted to know if there was a particularly unpopular topic, but – especially in the case of active users – no topic seems to be extremely unpopular. Most students mentioned EU law, types of contracts and the sample contract. These topics have no shared characteristics other than their scope: they attempt to cover particularly large fields within the framework of one lesson; therefore, it might be possible that the scope of these topics is just simply too broad. The structure of the sample contract differs from that of the other lessons: a real contract is analysed section by section, concerning the terms and expressions in it. We need to conduct further research into this question, why students had issues with it. However, based

on the opinion of active users, no topic proved to be particularly unpopular. In their case, some topics that certain students disliked were especially liked by others, therefore, considering all the factors, we will not remove or add topics to the course material.

5.2.7. Areas of development

The questionnaire had a comment field, in which many participants shared their opinion with us in detail. We were happy to conclude that an overwhelming majority of respondents evaluated our work and progress positively. Let me quote a first-year student, Antal Szabados, from the Faculty of Law, with his permission: "This has been by far the best distance learning seminar in terms of quality, and I am sure that I will be able to use the knowledge I acquired here in real life." We are delighted to hear many similar favourable feedbacks. However, we think of the concrete suggestions concerning the development of the platform as even more useful. Now, I discuss this feedback one by one and list the changes we plan to implement or that we have already implemented in order to remedy the shortcomings.

Some students regarded the monotony of the tasks negatively – this corresponds with the general criticism that e-learning usually attracts, monotony being the most often mentioned disadvantage (Pym et al. 2003). Since the drilling technique, which consists of completing many similar exercises, forms the basis for learning the course material, monotony is indeed part of the digital teaching platform of Anglofon Studio. We have several ideas on how to reduce monotony. As a first step, we develop numerous new types of exercises that will fulfil several functions at the same time, in contrast with the tests in traditional quiz format, but students will still be able to learn on their own. However, we have to work with traditional, simple tests also in the future, because data labelling is easy in their case, which in turn means that artificial intelligence can be incorporated into the learning process without difficulties. If we add novel and more creative exercises to the test, the necessary artificial intelligence function must also be developed at the same time so that the progress of students can be tracked.

The respondents put forward suggestions concerning improved interactivity; the lack of interaction is another frequently mentioned problem in e-learning environments (Kovalik-Deák 2021; Robin 2021). During the semester, we incorporated some new functions into the course and the students also had helpful suggestions – with these we wanted to make the platform more interactive. The forum has become an interactive place, because the questions related to the tasks were directly visible in the forum to which everybody has access. Earlier, students only had the chance to ask questions via e-mail and consequently only one student saw the answer. As a result of our development, the questions and remarks instantly appear in the forum together with a link that redirects to the given task. This way the questions and the answers to them become available to everybody in the class.

We took another important step forward and integrated a video streaming function into the platform, and as a result, we do not have to use the products of third parties anymore if we want to meet online with the class. Thanks to our latest development, there is a video conferencing function integrated into every group forum, so now we can have real time online classes, we can display the materials the students have sent us on the screen, and we can give verbal feedback to the students or with the help of some other functions on the platform, we can also provide feedback to them with visual tools. We also integrated an online quiz function into the course, owing to which it is possible to give real time feedback to the participants on their test results that they do together during the class.

Numerous students indicated that they would enjoy some more audio and video content; therefore, we also took steps to achieve this. The lectures that had been recorded previously were available in video format from the start, but we are making an effort to be able to share more video content with the participants. By creating audio files from the written materials, our goal is to breathe new life into the otherwise less exciting materials, and another goal is to make the task of visually impaired students easier.

Some suggestions were related to requirements, to specify them clearly, which is also essential in an e-learning environment (Bereczki et al. 2020). Therefore, we created a page where the requirements and instructions were shared with the university students before the beginning of the semester, thereby the schedule for the semester became clear for everyone as well as how the platform works.

The respondents pointed out some linguistic and spelling mistakes on the platform that are the inevitable consequences of creating exercises in such quantities. It is essential to remove these problems during platform testing. This semester, we have two interns who help us revise the tasks, this will most certainly improve the contents of the lessons further.

Furthermore, some suggestions were made on the functionality of the teaching platform, and we integrated these into certain elements of the platform on a regular basis. As the different functions are available on PCs, laptops, tablets and smartphones, we are making an effort to make every operation clear and easy-to-use on all devices.

7. Conclusion

Anglofon Studio has been involved in digital education for many years with its integrated teaching platform. As a result, when the Covid-19 outbreak started, we had a system in place that was ready for the remote learning period. This situation offered us plenty of opportunities to test our teaching platform with a larger sample, to look back and assess our journey up to the present and to draw lessons from our experiences for our own benefit and also to inform others.

The present essay described a digitalization process based on our experiences; this process can serve as an example and can be adopted to other areas and teaching activities. In this paper, I put special emphasis on digitalizing education materials and on how to apply artificial intelligence in education. In connection with AI, I highlighted the importance of properly labelling and coding the data and the fact that the development and consistent use of the database are further prerequisites for its successful implementation. Furthermore, the digitalization of education also affects the teachers, and the study reflected on this impact, as well. We listed the new tasks that a teacher has to perform in digital education and looked into the changing roles of teachers as the result of digitalization. After the theoretical discussion on education, the results of a survey were presented that we conducted in order to find out how effective our system is.

Looking back on the events of the past few months, I think that we made the right decision in 2013 when we started to develop our own digital platform, as we had the infrastructure ready in time, and we were able to respond to the urgent need for digital education effectively. We are aware of the fact that there is a continuous need for fine-tuning, but now we can react to new requests with a platform that has been thoroughly tested and can improve the effectiveness of education remarkably.

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Teaching consecutive interpreting online using asynchronous methods

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Abstract: During the first weeks of the Covid-19 lockdown, consecutive interpreting classes were held using a combination of synchronous and asynchronous distance learning methods in the French section of the Department of Translation and Interpreting of the Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE), Budapest. After the first week, a questionnaire was sent to the students. Based on their responses, I intend to highlight the aspects that one must take into consideration when students practise consecutive interpreting individually, using pre-recorded speeches uploaded to an online platform, and get feedback for their work later, based on the audio recordings of their interpreting. I would also like to briefly examine the difficulties and the positive developments students encountered while practising in distance mode.

Keywords: distance learning, consecutive interpreting, audio recordings, asynchronous methods, learning management system (LMS)

1. Introduction

As the Covid-19 pandemic became acute in the middle of the 2019/2020 spring semester, universities in Hungary switched to distance education from 12 March. This turn of events created a special situation in interpreter training which is normally based on on-site education. In the first three weeks of the distance education introduced at the Department of Translation and Interpreting of ELTE, I used asynchronous methods with all my groups to replace on-site classes. As a reaction to the students' feedbacks and my own experience, I subsequently dismissed this method in the case of consecutive interpreting. But before that, a questionnaire was filled in by all my students to whom I taught consecutive interpreting in any direction between French and Hungarian during this period.

In this paper, I would like to discuss the results of the questionnaire as well as my own impressions. Although I dismissed asynchronous methods after a few weeks, these results may still be relevant, as asynchronous methods are currently used in presential interpreter training courses (Rodríguez Melchor 2020, Riccardi et al 2020), and as a pre-selection tool during the EU institutions' interpreter accreditation test. (Seresi and Láncos 2018). Thus, an overview of these methods' characteristics may prove to be useful.

In what follows, I will briefly examine the theoretical aspects of interpreter training in a distance education setting, then I will present the distance education methods we used during the examined period as well as the circumstances in which the questionnaire was carried out. After that, I will analyse the students' answers and will attempt to supplement them with my own observations. Finally, I will summarize the most important conclusions and identify further areas of research related to this topic.

2. Distance education in conference interpreter training

Using distance learning tools in conference interpreter training is nothing new. As modern communication technologies became more and more generally used, they became an integral part of the interpreters' professional toolset (Móricz 2018). Video conference interpreting (with chat programmes used on video conference equipment or a smart phone) has become more and more widespread, and remote simultaneous interpretation platforms are also becoming increasingly popular. Obviously, students must be prepared for these market requirements by the active use of remote simultaneous interpretation platforms or video conference equipment in the classes (Seresi 2016a, 2016b).

Online tools may also offer a solution when we experience difficulties while organising our training courses. Depending on the problems we encounter, we can choose between synchronous and asynchronous tools.

2.1. Synchronous distance education tools in interpreter training

Distance education methods allow us to solve the problem of geographical distance. They allow students to interact with a large variety of trainers and native speakers without having to incur significant travel costs (Horváth and Seresi 2020). Distance education can also be useful in countries with a highly dispersed population (Ko 2006, 2008). In such cases, usually synchronous educational methods are used i.e. students and teachers – using a technological solution – participate in the class at the same time, interactively, although being physically distant from each other. Synchronous distance education methods include tele-tutoring, conference calls, live and interactive television broadcasts, webinars or video chat. Classes held using a digital platform are called virtual classes.

As interpreter training puts a very strong emphasis on communication and on the interaction between communication partners and the interpreter (Jones 1998), as well as on the presence of an audience during practice sessions (Seleskovitch and Lederer 1989), synchronous tools may seem to be more suitable than the asynchronous ones. Nevertheless, even virtual classes cannot replace on-site education, as during those, participants are physically distant from each other and their communication is mediated. Even synchronous methods cannot prevent the loss of

spontaneity: taking turns between speakers becomes awkward and eye contact can only be maintained in a virtual way. In an on-line setting, visual information can be insufficient and sound quality may also be problematic. Therefore, virtual classes complement but do not replace on-site education. That is the reasoning behind the concept of blended learning i.e. education relying on the methods of both distance and presential education (Seresi 2016b).

2.2. Asynchronous tools in interpreter training

If an online education tool or learning material can be used by students at their own pace, we are talking about an asynchronous tool. In such cases, the teacher and the student do their activities at different places and times. These methods allow students to schedule their progress better, but they are also associated with a lower communication level. Examples of asynchronous tools include e-books, interactive online learning materials, worksheets, e-mails, forums and tutorials.

Asynchronous e-learning tools had their forerunners long before the internet, as interpreter students and practising interpreters have always had a strong need for fresh and diverse language input in their working languages. Prior to the appearance of the internet and e-learning, trainers and interpreters already used the latest communication tools to obtain authentic speeches to practise. A good example for this in the 1970s was the use of audio recordings in schools' language laboratories (Chapman 1977) and in the 1980s the very popular VHS technology (Schweda-Nicholson 1985). Daniel Gile explained in 1991 how a simple transistor radio could be used to catch shortwave broadcasts in our working languages, to get linguistic and general knowledge inputs that are much more up-to-date than those offered by printed newspapers (Gile 1991).

Today, for the same purpose, trainers and students can use podcasts (Arzik Erzurumlu 2020), YouTube or TED Talks videos (Riccardi et al 2020) or even audio and video recordings made with a common smartphone. According to a survey of 62 trainers from 15 member universities of the European Masters of Conference Interpreting (EMCI[1]) Consortium, 90 % of the trainers interviewed allow students to use their smartphones to record speeches in class (Riccardi et al 2020).

The multilingual collections of audio and video recordings available online that students use for individual practice are also asynchronous tools. Examples of such online speech repositories are the Speech Pool (speechpool.net) or the Speech Repository run by the European Commission (webgate.ec.europa.eu/sr/). After registering in the "My Speech Repository" section of the latter, students can record their own interpretations and share them with their peers or trainers. These collections are often incorporated by trainers into classroom work or homework: 65 %

[1] The EMCI consortium has been set up and methodologically assisted by the interpreting services of the EU institutions, to provide high-level interpreter training based on common principles in all of the EU member states. See more at https://www.emcinterpreting.org/

of EMCI trainers surveyed in the above-mentioned research give homework from the Speech Repository to students for individual practice (Riccardi et al 2020).

Trainers often choose to use asynchronous methods when time constraints prevent them from regularly listening to and giving feedback on each student's interpretation. In this case, students record the interpretation (typically an audio recording) during or outside of classroom practice. This recording is then sent to the trainer, who gives feedback.

The use of a learning management system (LMS), such as Moodle or Canvas, makes it easy to share recordings, clearly assign related tasks, and link glossaries and other background materials to a specific speech to be interpreted. However, only 37.7 % of trainers surveyed in the EMCI survey stated that they use such systems (Riccardi et al 2020). Nevertheless, this survey was conducted before the pandemic and it would be very interesting to see how the situation changed after March 2020.

For the practice of interpreting in an asynchronous setting, an interesting alternative to LMS or to platforms like Speech Repository can be 3D virtual reality, such as Second Life (Eraslan et al 2020). By placing the interpretation exercise into simulated situations, trainers can move the student out of the classroom situation, and make them virtually "experience" some typical interpreting locations or scenarios.

If the trainer uses pre-recorded speeches and listens to students' interpretations on audio recordings, they have greater control over the source language speech and can also recognize trends in errors that recur in multiple interpretations. However, such practice does not allow students to practise spontaneous interaction or public performance. In addition, in contrast to the exam situation, the trainer does not give feedback on the basis of a one-time and unrepeatable performance, as they can listen to and analyse the recording several times, which would be impossible in a real interpretation situation (Rodríguez Melchor 2020). In addition, research suggests that recordings with limited or missing visual information do not always suffice for proper interpretation (Renner 2008). Therefore, we can conclude once again that asynchronous methods should only complement and not replace on-site education.

3. Distance education at the Department of Translation and Interpreting of ELTE during the coronavirus pandemic in spring 2020

During the first three weeks of distance education, I decided to use a combination of synchronous and asynchronous methods in my consecutive interpreting courses. Tasks were given, carried out and evaluated in an asynchronous manner, whereas feedback was given synchronously through a video chat.

Uploading video files on any platform or sending them via e-mail would have been time-consuming and would have required an important storage capacity. Therefore, we opted for audio files which were made available to the students on the weekly modules created on Canvas (for more about Canvas Learning Manage-

ment System, see Robin 2021 in present volume). Each week, we uploaded two original speeches for each class: students interpreted both speeches and recorded themselves in two different audio files which they then uploaded in the weekly modules. Students were given no special instructions on how to record their interpreting, for example, whether they may stop the recorded speech or restart their interpreting.

As a means of comparison, it is important to note that during traditional on-site classes, we usually manage to listen to three or four speeches which are then interpreted into the target language by three to five students. Even though in this phase of distance learning students got only two speeches to work with, they were, however, given the opportunity to actively interpret them both. Every week, four students received feedback through a video chat at the time scheduled originally for the in-person class. Since trainers always listened to two interpretations of a same speech, some tendencies took shape and we managed to find the parts with which most students struggled. On the other hand, parts which were unproblematic in the versions we listened to were only discussed later if a student remembered and requested it.

As we had to allocate time for each step of the process, completing a consecutive interpreting task dragged on for some time. Typically, students had to upload their own interpreting on Canvas 2-3 days after the original speech was uploaded, so that my native speaker colleague and I had one or one and a half days available to listen to the recordings and make notes before the video chat.

Both trainers (that is the native French lector and I) took part in the video chat so that students could ask questions regarding not only the source language speech but also the possible equivalences and difficulties in the target language. Feedback was always given first by the trainer who was the native speaker in the target language. Students could ask questions during and after the feedback. Both trainers gave feedback if they spoke the target language, if not, then the speaker of the source language participated in the discussion by making remarks or answering questions regarding the source language speech.

However, these discussions were less interactive than the ones we grew accustomed to in on-site classes. In the alienating conditions of the video chat (Braun 2007) it was difficult for me to determine whether students found our feedback useful or at least acceptable. This is one of the reasons why I decided to create a questionnaire.

When drafting this questionnaire, I mostly sought to find out how students worked with the recordings and whether they found useful the feedback they received several days after having completed the interpretation exercises. I assumed that, all in all, students were spending more time on their studies during distance learning than previously. I believed that they tended to stop and restart both the original speech as well as their own recording of interpreting, even though they were well-aware that this was not necessarily desirable. My final hypothesis was that students did not find the delayed, albeit live, feedback sufficiently useful.

4. The questionnaire

Distance learning was put into practice on 23 March 2020, after the spring break was brought forward. This meant that we began uploading audio files and documents on Canvas as early as 19 March, so that students could begin working on them. On 28 March, I sent out the link for the Google Forms questionnaire through the Neptun online academic administration system and all my students had filled it in within two weeks. Although being an anonymous questionnaire, from the number of filled in questionnaires (22) and the composition of respondents (16 students with a French B and 6 with a French C), we can safely assume that every student filled in one questionnaire. A sample of 22 persons is quite small-scale, moreover, the respondents' pattern of language combinations and levels of progression were considerably heterogeneous. Still I am convinced that my research can provide an interesting insight into this new, unpredicted situation.

To test the questionnaire, I asked a student with whom I also worked during this period using asynchronous methods, but whose language combination did not include French, to fill in the questionnaire. After filling in, the student did not report any problems.

The students who completed the questionnaire can be grouped as follows:

(1) 1st year MA students, active French – MA1 FR B: 9 persons
(2) 1st year MA students, passive French – MA1 FR C: 4 persons
(3) 2nd year MA students, active French – MA2 FR B: 5 persons
(4) 2nd year MA student, passive French – MA2 FR C: 1 person
(5) EMCI[2] students, active French – EMCI FR B: 2 persons
(6) EMCI student, passive French – EMCI FR C: 1 person

Total: 22 persons

The questionnaire consisted of 10 questions which can be found in the Annex. The first two questions addressed students' studies: in the first one I asked if French was the student's B or C language, and in the second if the respondent was a 1st year MA student. It means that I merged 2nd year MA students with the EMCI students, who study simultaneous interpretation besides consecutive interpretation. I did this for two reasons: first, EMCI and French C students were so few that it would have been possible for me to identify individual students based on these two questions, and I insisted on maintaining anonymity. Second, according to my subjective opinion, the main divide in terms of experience and work methods can be observed between the two years of the master's programme. As such, in my opinion, 2nd year students' proficiency is closer to that of EMCI students, although

[2] Students of the EMCI (European Masters in Conference Interpreting) programme also study simultaneous interpreting besides consecutive interpreting, and most of them had typically already finished a course in consecutive interpreting before enrolling on the EMCI course.

I cannot support this statement with research results. I still think that this question is suitable for dividing the group into two based on students' level of progress.

5. Students' replies

In the following section, I will examine the students' replies question by question. In some instances I will also compare these answers with replies students gave to other questions.

As the first two questions have more of an administrative quality, and are only important in relation to other questions, I will not discuss them separately. The answers reveal however that in accordance with the composition of the groups, 16 respondents had French as a B language, and 6 had it as a C language, and that 13 respondents were 1st year students and 9 were 2nd year or EMCI students.

5.1. "I stop or replay the original speech when taking notes."

In the first substantial question I asked if students stop or replay the recording during the first phase of consecutive interpretation (listening and notetaking). The replies are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1
Stopping or replaying the recording when taking notes

	MA1		MA2/EMCI		FR B		FR C		Total	
Always	1	7.7 %	0	0 %	1	6.2 %	0	0 %	1	4.5 %
Sometimes	9	69.2 %	5	55.6 %	8	50 %	6	100 %	14	63.6 %
Never	3	23 %	4	44.4 %	7	43.8 %	0	0 %	7	31.5 %

As there were only 22 respondents, who cannot be divided into equally large groups, oversegmentation can quickly result in unrealistic conclusions. In spite of this, I think that based on the above data, we can conclude that more experienced students resorted to this method less often than the less experienced. The picture is similar when we compare B and C language students, which suggests that French B students are more confident in both understanding and multitasking.

It's interesting to note that even though there were no instructions as to how the students should proceed with the recordings, they all tried to imitate a real-life situation, that is to say, listening to the same speech only once. At the same time, replaying may have an important role in improving understanding and vocabulary, but it should happen after interpreting, when students rework the problematic parts of the speeches. In the next question, I asked students about their opinion on stopping or replaying the original speeches.

5.2. "Stopping and replaying the speech is a method that…"

To answer this question, students had to finish the sentence to express their opinion about the possibility of replaying. As this was an open question, many students even raised several interesting points, while one student completely skipped it. I summarized the answers in Table 2.

Table 2
Opinions about replaying recordings when taking notes

It's cheating or self-deception, doesn't reflect the real performance, it could never happen in a real-life setting	15
In real life, we could ask questions from the speaker, rewinding is a substitute for that	5
Improves/would improve performance	5
One must refrain from it, or not resort to it too often	5
Hard to resist, the thought is tempting	4
Doesn't necessarily improve performance	2
Allows for a deeper understanding of the topic and the vocabulary	2
The main advantage is not necessarily that one can replay the speech, but that one has time to gather one's thoughts before doing the interpretation	1
Good to have the possibility to listen again after interpretation	1
Gives me confidence	1
Comes in handy in the case of an unexpected disturbance (e.g..: doorbell ringing)	1

The answers show that many of the students view the possibility of rewinding the speeches as cheating or self-deception, after which the performance cannot be regarded valid. However, several students see the question as more complex. They list arguments for and against the practice, most often mentioning the impossibility of asking questions from the speaker. I believe this is a very important observation, as in real life, even if asking detailed questions is not always possible, short questions are accepted. Moreover, if the interpreter and the speaker can see each other they can communicate without words. For instance, by reacting to the expression on the interpreter's face, the speaker may slow down the pace or opt for a different speech strategy. This is not possible when using recordings, as the speech production and the interpreter's analysing and understanding activities are carried out at a different time.

In conclusion, although it seems like a lot of students do use this option, the grand majority views it as cheating or self-deception, a temptation to be avoided, or something that can only be acceptable after the interpreting happens or in a case of force majeure.

5.3. "If I am not satisfied with my interpreting, I restart the recording."

Next, I wanted to know whether the students repeat the interpreting and restart the recording if they are not satisfied with their first performance. The summary of their responses can be found in Table 3.

Table 3
Restarting the recording

	MA1		MA2/EMCI		FR B		FR C		Összesen	
Always	2	15.3 %	0	0 %	0	0 %	2	33.3 %	2	9 %
Sometimes	9	69.2 %	5	55.6 %	12	75 %	2	33.3 %	14	63.6 %
Never	2	15.3 %	4	44.4 %	4	25 %	2	33.3 %	6	27.2 %

Table 3 is very similar to Table 1. It reveals that more experienced students restart the recording significantly less often compared to 1st year students, and students with a French B also resort to this solution less than students with a French C. Therefore, this practice also seems to correlate with the students' level of progress. The data suggests once again that those who have French as their C language are less confident in their performance.

5.4. "Restarting the interpreting is a method that…"

Next, I asked students to express their opinion about restarting the recording of their interpreting when they are not satisfied with the first version. Out of the 22 respondents, 20 gave an answer to this question. Some respondents brought up several ideas again, which I will summarize in Table 4.

Table 4
Opinions about restarting the recording

It cannot happen in reality, it is cheating	8
It improves quality as you have more time to think it through	5
It is good and useful for practising	3
Compared to live interpreting, sound quality is more important here, therefore, it is good that you can start again if there is some unexpected noise in the background	3

Acceptable as it is difficult to perform and concentrate without an audience	2
The recording itself causes stress, therefore it is justified	2
As our voice is the only tool we have in this case, corrections and pauses are more annoying, which is why I restart recording	2
It does not help	2
It reduces stress	1
Knowing that I could restart it confuses me even more	1
It does not help as I am never satisfied with my performance	1

Table 4 reveals that students have a similar view on restarting the recording to replaying the original speech: they think of it as "cheating", a practice far from reality, which unfairly improves quality, but may be justified by the disadvantages of the asynchronous methods (mainly by the lack of audience and of non-verbal communication). Despite their aversions, almost all of them resort to this solution from time to time.

5.5. "Feedback received through video chat is…"

Next, I attempted to find out how useful students considered the feedback they received through video chat, several days after they recorded their performances. I summarized their answers in Table 5.

Table 5
Usefulness of feedback received through video chat

	MA 1		**MA 2/ EMCI**		**FR B**		**FR C**		**Total**	
Useful for every participant	8	61.5 %	8	88.9 %	10	62.5 %	6	100 %	16	72.7 %
Only useful for the person in question	3	23 %	0	0 %	3	18.8 %	0	0 %	3	13.6 %
Hard to follow even for the person in question	0	0 %	0	0 %	0	0 %	0	0 %	0	0 %
Other	2	15.4 %	1	11.1 %	3	18.8 %	0	0 %	3	13.6 %

Fortunately, no student felt that the feedback received was not useful for anybody. On the other hand, more experienced students were much more inclined to say that this kind of feedback was also useful for people other than the ones it was directed at. They were probably able to make better use of the feedback due to their greater experience and more conscious approach to their progress.

Three students used the "other" option. The points they raised are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6
Usefulness of the feedback – points raised by students

It is difficult to identify what the feedback refers to because of the time that has passed since completing the task	2
It is difficult to remember my own problems because of the time that has passed since completing the task	1
It is difficult to identify what the feedback refers to as we did not hear the interpreting in question	1
Paying attention is more tiring, especially because of the sound quality	1
Due to the lack of on-site classes, I felt I could not immerse myself in the topic, despite the preparation	1
Only feedback about specific words and terminology is useful for everybody	1

I find it fascinating how clearly data in Table 6 shows students' need to recognise links and contexts, which is definitely a positive thing for interpreter training. Even during on-site training sessions, we use speeches that have been removed from the real-life situation and context. If feedback can still be understood in these cases, it is because both the source language version and the interpreted version had been heard by all parties just moments before. If feedback is not given immediately after, giving and understanding it will be harder for all. The trainer will need more elaborate notes and an extensive explanation so that the students can unambiguously understand what the feedback is given on. Similarly, the students will need to take notes on their problems, and it is doubtful whether they will be able to recall what solutions they used and why at a given point, only by looking at their consecutive notes.

Based on all of the above, we can presume that asynchronous feedback is less useful than feedback given during an on-site class. Also, it most definitely requires extra work from the trainer – and based on the answers given to the questions below, we will determine whether this is true for the students as well.

5.6. "As distance learning calls for different methods, the time spent on my studies …"

In the next question I asked whether students spend less, more, or the same amount of time on their studies during distance learning compared to traditional education. I summarized their answers in Table 7.

Table 7
Changes in the time spent on studies

	MA 1		**MA 2/EMCI**		**FR B**		**FR C**		**Total**	
Spend more time on their studies	5	38.5 %	7	77.8 %	7	43.8 %	5	83.3 %	12	54.5 %
Spend the same amount of time on their studies	7	53.8 %	2	22.2 %	8	50 %	1	16.7 %	9	40.9 %
Spend less time on their studies	1	7.7 %	0	0 %	1	6.3 %	0	0 %	1	4.5 %

The tendency described in Table 7 coincides with the home office experience of many. Despite the fact that students did not have to commute to get to class, and by their own admission they had more time at their disposal than before, their workload did not ease – on the contrary, due to distance learning many faced a heavier workload. This growth is more noticeable in the case of more experienced students, as opposed to first-year students. It may be hypothesised that more experienced students are able to control their learning processes more consciously, and thus they are more aware of what extra steps are needed (for example, taking notes on their problems) to be able to improve their skills in a distance learning setting.

Among the French B group an almost equal number of students reported a heavier workload than an unchanged workload, and one student even said spending less time with their studies than before. However, among the French C group there are clearly more students whose workload got heavier. A possible explanation can be that due to their language difficulties, French C students found it more difficult to manage their progress in an autonomous way.

5.7. „Currently for me the biggest problem with distance learning is …"

In the next question I asked students to describe what their biggest problem was in the distance learning setting. I summarised their answers in Table 8.

Table 8
Students' difficulties in distance learning

HEAVIER WORKLOAD	There are more deadlines to keep track of, more tasks to schedule, time management is more autonomous.	8
	Due to the number of deadlines at the beginning of the week, the weekends are not free	3
	Many tasks are due at the beginning of the week, so everything must be done at the same time	3
	There is no time for autonomous self-study (e.g. listening to podcasts, watching movies in the working languages)	2
	For a few courses extra tasks are assigned	1
	Multiple platforms must be used	3
	We need to sign in to the platforms in order to keep track of tasks and deadlines	1
ARTIFICIAL SITUATION, NO INTERACTION	The situation for interpreting is unrealistic	1
	Recording is awkward	1
	As the interpretation is not live, there is no stage fright	3
	There is no audience when interpreting	8
	It's not possible to ask questions after a speech	2
	It cannot replace live feedback	1
INSUFFICIENT COLLABORATION AMONG STUDENTS	We cannot listen to each other's interpretation, even though we could learn a lot from it	1
	I miss discussing the topics with the group	2
	I miss peer feedback	1
PHYSICAL AND MENTAL EFFECTS	Being alone, working from home is monotone	3
	I feel less improvement	1
	A lot of time must be spent sitting in front of a computer	1
	More tiring	1

Table 8 gives a clear picture of why working from home is always hard: the new, complex schedule creates a heavier workload, online communication is alienating and there is less cooperation with co-workers. However, these answers also allow

us to examine the traditional on-site practice sessions from a quasi-external point of view, comparing them to the online learning. It is a very valuable feedback for trainers about how important it is for students to perform in front of their peers, to listen to each other's performance, to talk about it, and to discuss the topics together.

5.8. „The methods used in distance education have their advantages compared to the traditional educational setting, or can complement the latter, as…"

The last question of the questionnaire prompted students to describe the possible advantages of distance education. Students raised many fewer points here than for the previous question. Their answers are summarized in Table 9.

Table 9.
Pros of distance education

MORE TIME	No commuting	6
	More time for practice and self-study	4
	Fewer restrictions set by others, easier scheduling of work	2
	More time for the different topics and exercises, thus better performance	1
	More free time for sports and relaxation	1
THINGS POSSIBLE ONLY THROUGH DISTANCE EDUCATION	Both the original recording and the interpretation can be listened to immediately after interpretation (to look for mistakes or learn the vocabulary)	1
	The trainers can listen to everyone, if they have the time	1
	It would be a nice addition to presential courses as well	1
PROS OF PLATFORMS USED	The platforms used are satisfactory	1
	Communication is simplified by the chat function	1
LEARNING NEW SKILLS THAT ARE INVALUABLE IN PROFESSIONAL LIFE	Helps the acquisition of autonomy necessary in professional life	1
	Preparation for professional life through familiarization with online communication	2
	Practice of remote interpretation	3
	Learning about new methods	1

NOT WORSE THAN TRADITIONAL TRAINING METHODS	We are still productive	3
	Communication is still fine	1
	Adequate for presentations	1
NO ADVANTAGES	There are no advantages	2
	Only drawbacks	1
UNSURE	Not sure yet	1

Based on table 9 it is obvious that students reflected upon their experiences of the entire training throughout the week, rather than just the asynchronous interpretation exercises. It is interesting to note that students listed among the disadvantages the heavier workload and the difficulty of setting up one's own schedule, mentioning however among the most important advantages the abundance of free time and independent time management. Since only one student stated in the previous question that distance learning required less studying, I believe students probably mostly made use of the time saved by the absence of commuting.

Furthermore, the answers revealed that students constantly monitor how effective the teaching process is to them individually, what other undeveloped skills they can acquire and what kind of new opportunities they can discover through the use of modern technology. Unfortunately, due to the small number of answers, there is no point in breaking down the results based on the level of progress and the languages combination of students, though it would be interesting to examine if students are less or more aware of advantages and disadvantages depending on these factors.

6. Conclusion

In the first three weeks of the distance education launched during the 2019/2020 spring semester, I used a combination of asynchronous and synchronous distance learning methods to replace my on-site consecutive interpreting classes. I asked my students to fill in a questionnaire about their experiences.

The results did not show anything unexpected. Still I believe I have managed to complement existing literature with some interesting information, and to confirm my initial hypotheses with empirical data. Nowadays with our modern ICT (Information and Communication Technology) devices, we can make and share recordings with such ease that their use seems obvious for us. Still, it is important to note that asynchronous methods differ in their characteristics from the methods used during on-site training or live interpretation.

As for the speeches uploaded to Canvas, students think that these can hardly simulate a real-life situation. During the examined period, when facing a diffi-

culty, the majority of students had rewound several times the original speeches before interpreting them (95.5 %) or had restarted their own recording (90.9 %) despite considering it as cheating or self-deception. If they still resort to these practices, they justify it by the disadvantages of asynchrony, like the lack of communication with the speaker, the lack of audience, and with the lack of visual contact, depriving interpreters of all of their tools except for their voice. The lack of communication and the asynchronous nature make the exercise similar to the interpretation of pre-written and read out texts even in the case of improvised ones. More experienced and French B students, based on their own admission, resort to these methods less frequently, compared to their first year and French C peers. Based on this, I think asynchronous tools should only be used to complement synchronous tools, and by no means replace them (or on-site education).

It is advisable to give clear instructions about how many times the students are allowed to listen to the original recording and how they should record their own, but we have to acknowledge the fact that enforcing these rules is next to impossible. Even if it is possible to digitally restrict how many times or for how long the recording can be accessed, these restrictions can be circumvented or can create an unfair situation if a force majeure occurs. Restrictions are not necessarily the most effective solutions anyway. If we consider this exercise as a preparation, or a supplement to „normal" consecutive interpretation, we may allow multiple listenings, since several students noted that it allows a further immersion in the topic and a more thorough reflection on terminology. Of course, in ideal cases this immersion should happen after interpretation, but students are a lot less motivated to redo an exercise they consider to be done, and that would make them confront their mistakes.

The students' answers made it clear that it would be helpful for them if the sound recordings would be accompanied with visual inputs, although it would require a suitable technical background. However, where possible, it is definitely recommended to use video recordings instead of sound recordings.

On a different note, the absence of a live or even visible audience had a reassuring effect on many students and enhanced their performance. As a trainer, I found this quite alarming in certain cases since I feared that once they get used to talking more calmly without an audience, it will be difficult for them to get back to real-life scenarios. This aspect should be given serious consideration when organizing any form of distance or on-line interpreter training course.

As for the time lag in feedback, it caused a problem mainly for first year students. As a trainer, I felt that under these circumstances, I could provide more detailed feedback to students since I could rewind the recordings - which does not necessarily correspond however to a real exam situation or the "here and now" impressions of a real client. At the same time, I had to make a lot more effort to take notes for my feedback and to be able to explain everything clearly, even days later. In these circumstances, some otherwise important corrections have become completely meaningless (e.g. those related to slips of the tongue or unclear ways of expression). In addition to this, looking back several days later, even the students

themselves did not remember their decisions and could not justify them, therefore it was much harder to diagnose certain problems. It is thus justified in an asynchronous setting to focus our feedback only on well-defined problems and on the general lessons that can be drawn for everybody's benefit.

During this period, students did not exclusively use asynchronous tools. Analysing their overall learning activities after the first weeks, they identified the increase in workload, the decrease in interactivity and intragroup cooperation, as well as isolation as the most difficult things to manage in distance education, while among the advantages, they highlighted the more autonomous scheduling of activities, the well-functioning technology and the acquisition of new digital skills required in the labour market.

While speaking about online education, students also pinpointed the aspects and elements of on-site education they missed the most. If we can teach again under traditional circumstances, we must make sure that we provide sufficient time for students during training sessions to discuss current topics with each other, to listen to each other's interpreting and to give peer feedback. It is very difficult to carry out these activities in an online setting and even more so using asynchronous tools, even though students need them and consider them useful.

It would be worth examining in further research what proportion on-line and on-site education should have in interpreter training courses' curriculum to ensure the best results, as well as how often and within what framework the different interpreter training institutions use sound recordings for teaching purposes. The trends appearing on this small sample involving 22 people could be confirmed by broader research, particularly focusing on the differences between students with different levels of progress or language combinations.

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Annex – Questionnaire

Distance education

Dear Students,

Last week, speeches were uploaded into Canvas and you submitted to trainers your interpretation exercises the same way. Please fill in this brief questionnaire about your experiences of the past week. Don't hesitate to be honest when answering the questions, as there are no right or wrong answers. I would like to get to know the truth.

French is my

- ☐ B language
- ☐ C language

Currently in the translator and interpreter training,

- ☐ I am a first-year MA student.
- ☐ I am a second-year MA or an EMCI student

I stop or replay the original speech when taking notes.

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Never

Stopping and replaying the speech is a method that

If I am not satisfied with my interpreting, I restart the recording.

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Never

Restarting the interpreting is a method that

_____

Feedback received through video chat is

- ☐ useful for every participant
- ☐ only useful for the person in question
- ☐ hard to follow even for the person in question
- ☐ other…

As distance education calls for different methods, I devote

- ☐ the same amount of time to my studies as during traditional education
- ☐ less amount of time to my studies as during traditional education
- ☐ more amount of time to my studies as during traditional education

Currently for me the biggest problem with distance learning is

_____

The methods used in distance education have their advantages compared to the traditional educational setting, or can complement the latter, as

_____

_____

Teaching simultaneous interpreting during the lockdown: What can we learn from this extraordinary semester?

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Abstract: The study describes the interpreting classes held at the Department of Translation and Interpreting at ELTE in the spring term of 2019/2020 in distance learning mode and discusses the case in the broader perspective of education. The period described brought about an extensive change in the life of students and tutors. There had been no interpreting courses given and exams administered solely in the online mode before, without the personal presence of the participants. This was borne out of necessity. In March 2020, after a week of redesigning the courses, distance, online training started. Our department has several years of experience in the field of distance learning, however, we had not offered interpreting courses in this mode previously. The new work form posed various challenges to the participants of the interpreting course: to students as well as teachers. At the end of the term we were pleased to conclude that interpreting can be taught online at an acceptable standard. However, we cannot be fully relieved as we do not know in which mode we will continue in the following terms. But distance teaching, and online classes are more than a necessity. In the future a good part of interpreting assignments will be in this mode, so it's time to start thinking about the methods we should use for preparing our students for the future challenges of online communication and remote interpreting.

Keywords: distant training of interpreters, EMCI, remote interpreting (RI), virtual conference, virtual booth, frustration tolerance

1. Introduction

Remote interpreting (RI) "refers to the use of communication technologies to gain access to an interpreter in another room, building, town, city or country" (Braun 2015: 352). In recent months, it has been particularly important that technology enables us to communicate with colleagues, clients and interpreters who work far away from us. Since simulating real situations is an essential element in interpreter training (González-Davies and Enríquez-Raído 2016), the attendance system was replaced by remote interpreting during simultaneous interpretation classes, which required great flexibility and openness from teachers and students alike. Our

institution has already had experience in teaching bilateral, consecutive interpreting in the form of virtual classes (Seresi 2016), but the simulation of an event connecting many locations and interpreted into various languages in synchronous mode was unprecedented, since such a task is extreme in its complexity and difficulty. The global changes and restrictions introduced in March 2020 led people to a new normal in work, learning and private life.

In May 2020, AIIC (International Organisation for Conference Interpreters) issued a recommendation on best practice in simultaneous remote interpretation, including optimal conditions for interpreting from home[1]. A number of options are mentioned in relation to the possible location of interpreters. In the first, interpreters and active participants of the conference are in one place, and some other active participants are in a remote location. In the second, interpreters all work in one location, while participants listen to interpretation from a remote location. The third option is that interpreters are in the same place as their boothmates, but they are far from the participants. The fourth option is that each interpreter works individually, far from the boothmate and interpreter colleagues, at home, in virtual booths and a virtual team. This was the case during the lockdown period.

Option four significantly restricts technical assistance, the support of the boothmate and the interpreter team, and the interpreter has to make sure they can work in silence and without disturbance. Without doubt, this method is the most burdensome for the interpreter, and it should be considered carefully whether to take on such an assignment and, if so, under what conditions and remuneration. However, all these questions have arisen in the new normal world, which includes teaching simultaneous interpretation in the distance learning mode.

In the next chapter, we will first look back on the history of remote interpreting via an experiment and then describe the virtual mock conferences held during the lockdown. In the final part, I am looking for solutions to the challenges that have arisen during the lockdown, and I will review the educational and research tasks of the future.

2. What did the profession think of remote interpreting before March 2020?

Even in the early 2000s, remote interpreting was not a novelty. In her study describing an experiment comparing human factors and performance parameters of real presence simultaneous interpretation and remote interpreting, Moser-Mercer (2003) mentions several previous occasions when large international institutions used remote interpretation from practical aspects for reasons of cost-saving and simplifying the organisation of an event.

In the experiment, the stress level of simultaneous interpreters, the quality of their interpretation and their attitude towards remote interpreting were examined.

According to Moser-Mercer's hypothesis, there is no significant difference between work in presence and distance mode from the point of view of interpreters. The number of participants in the study is quite small, it does not yield statistically significant results, but the numbers show a marked trend and the hypothesis is clearly refutable. Interpreting is less stressful for the interpreters present at the venue of the conference. This can be concluded by examining saliva samples taken from interpreters, while interpreters working away from the venue of the event are at a higher stress level, fatigue sets in sooner, and during their 30-minute interpreting phases the quality of their output is weaker. Based on the lessons of the experiment, the remote mode requires too much energy from the interpreters, extra attention must be spent on coordinating the incoming sound and image, some of the movements at the location of the communication are lost for them, and they often feel that they have lost control.

The research gives details of the audio and image technology that is carefully provided to the interpreters who perform remote interpreting. They can see 3 camera positions on their screen. So we can safely say that from a technical point of view, the situation of the colleagues doing remote interpreting in the experiment is enviable, yet it is a great burden to them that they are not personally present at the event. 50 % of the interpreters who participated in the experiment said that they would once again accept remote interpreting assignments with the technical background provided in the experiment. According to their opinion, 70 % of their colleagues would take similar remote interpreting assignments, but only 33 % of participants believed that remote interpreting assignments were acceptable in the interpreting market. The results suggest that the interpreters thought that they would have a choice as to whether they would like to interpret remotely or prefer to remain in the traditional mode. Here it is worth noting that remote interpreting was a big novelty for those involved in the experiment, and this can also explain their elevated stress levels.

In Moser-Mercer's conclusion, she recommends that interpreters work with shorter shifts in remote interpreting, so that they can eliminate deteriorating quality, and that professionals providing technical background should carefully plan the visual input to the interpreter.

Nearly two decades have passed since the experiment, and remote interpreting is becoming increasingly part of the repertoire of simultaneous interpreters, and the training of interpreters in this area is becoming increasingly necessary (Braun 2015, Seresi 2016). March 2020 can be seen as a turning point in this respect, as the restrictions caused by the Covid-19 virus have led to a drastic lockdown, or at least a reduction in the number of conferences, and thus the tasks of simultaneous interpreters have also been greatly reduced, mostly limited to remotely interpreted events[2]. It is possible that in the future, the new standard will also be remote oral language mediation, and the new situation will thoroughly rearrange the market for language service providers as well as interpreter training.

3. Interpreting and interpreter training from March 2020

As of March 16 2020, the Hungarian higher education institutions physically closed their doors in view of the pandemic situation, and ELTE also ordered a week's spring break for students. Tutors were given a week's preparation time to prepare for remote education. The Department for Translating and Interpreting at ELTE has been offering courses in distance learning to those seeking qualifications in translation, revision and terminology. Using the university's interactive learning management system, Canvas, curriculums, assignments, texts and videos were uploaded, and students acquire knowledge in an asynchronous manner and thus account for their knowledge. In distance learning, only the entry interview and the final exams require a personal appearance. Thus, the department has considerable experience in the transfer of knowledge in distance education.

3.1 Changes in the communication environment and the challenges of remoteness

However, it is no coincidence that interpreting is taught exclusively in attendance courses, as one of the most important factors of oral language transmission is the presence of the interpreter at the event. So it was out of necessity that we used both asynchronous and synchronous modes to cover the rest of the 7 weeks of the spring semester with our interpreter trainees. In addition to asynchronous methods (see Seresi's study in this volume), synchronous, real-time hours were needed. The Zoom videochat platform, which was accessible free of charge and suitable for holding virtual lessons, was a good service provider in teaching consecutive interpreting. The participants could see and hear each other, and this could somewhat offset the remoteness. However, the weekly mock-conferences at the department's conference interpreter training (EMCI) required more sophisticated, tailor-made technology.

3.2 KUDO

The growing demand for remote interpreting has led to the rapid development of digital platform solutions tailored to the task in recent decades. At the time of the outbreak of the pandemic, a number of multilingual teleconference platforms were available, but unlike Zoom, MS Teams and other similar videochat platforms, they are not free, organising a conference costs a significant hourly fee. On the other hand, in order to ensure adequate image and sound quality, broadband Internet (the use of Wi-Fi is not recommended by manufacturers), professional microphones and headphones are needed for conference participants (performers, participants and interpreters). Thirdly, the smartphones used for videochats are not sufficient to take

part in a conference, and participants are recommended to use a laptop or desktop computer.

Our department used KUDO, the multilingual webconference platform to teach conference interpreting. The company offered the tool to our department gratis, and provided assistance in the training of the participating students and teachers.

The platform allows multi-channel communication using a videochat platform. The moderator creates the event and sends the invitation separately to participants, who will be visible on the interface and to interpreters who will not appear on screen. Participants of the conference will appear on small screens. On your own screen, you can choose whether you want to listen to the language output of the speaker (floor) or one of the interpreters' booths. The conversation is controlled by the moderator. The camera can be switched on and off at will. The microphone can also be turned on and off, in one mode the word can be asked from the moderator, and in the other, anyone can comment by turning on the microphone. During the lectures you can configure the view of the screen as a performer. In this case, you can only see the performer, or the presentation, and a little screen of the performer. Participants can send chat messages to each other and to the moderator. Only the moderator can send messages to interpreters. Interpreters can chat with each other and the moderator, but not with the participants.

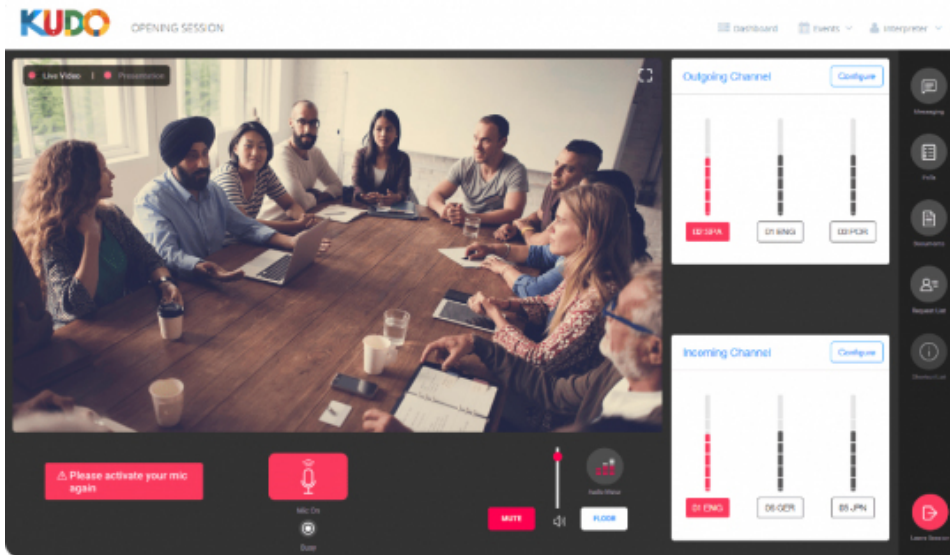
Interpreters interpret the performers from virtual booths, they are not visible. The two interpreters in the booths are in two different locations. In the spring semester, it was not possible for interpreters to follow their booth mates and the presenter at the same time. One student described the situation as follows:

> We only heard our partner when we added our own booth to the incoming channels, and when we did not interpret, we were able to listen to our partner's work by clicking on it, but we did not hear the speaker/the other interpreter who was providing the relay. For me personally, one of the biggest difficulties was that I couldn't hear the speaker and my partner parallel, so we couldn't adapt to each other, use the same terminology, and we didn't know where and how the other stopped talking when the handover took place. That's why we agreed in advance on the slide after which the other will take the floor, so we knew approximately what the last sentence was.

The difficulty was indicated to the operators of the platform, who are working on the problem.

When using the platform, interpreters can switch on and off on a virtual console (soft console), mute their microphones, have a separate switching device with a request and ready button, and a countdown to make the handover as smooth as possible. A relay in the system is also possible. Figure 1 shows the interface of KUDO.

Figure 1
KUDO interface for event participants[1]



The platform could be used to connect two or three locations, but the limitations during the lockdown focused on keeping physical distance, so the usual framework for remote interpreting, in which two or perhaps three locations are connected by technology were changed to many individual locations per participant. While remote conferencing platforms provide technical parameters for optimum use and recommend the use of interpreting studios and technical backgrounds for interpreters[1], everyone had to rely on their own home toolkit during the restrictions, which in many cases caused technical difficulties. The first conference was preceded by a joint training conference for trainers and students, in which we tried out the different functions of the platform.

From the last week of March, we held a virtual mock conference one afternoon a week for 7 weeks with 8 conference interpreters, trainers and native speakers. The presentations could be followed in Hungarian, English, German, French and Dutch. The aim of the mock conferences is to simulate a real conference situation, and thanks to KUDO, our conferences have proven to be 100 % authentic, similar to the attendance sessions.

The mock conference followed the procedures of attendance classes: the chair opened and chaired the conference, making sure that all languages were covered. The participants held four or five twenty-minute lectures, after which questions could be asked. After the closing of the conference, the interpreters appeared on the screen, we discussed the lessons of the conference and gave feedback on the performance of the interpreters.

[1] For example, see https://KUDOway.com/blog/KUDO-opens-first-european-studio/

3.3 In what way is teaching remote interpreting different?

3.3.1 The Platform

The training of conference interpreters in the presence mode also requires device and technology-intensive activities, booths and costly equipment. In order to hold virtual interpreting classes (Seresi 2016), videoconferencing equipment is also required together with staff who can operate it. All of these can be used in regular training when students and trainers are present at the same location. In the remote mode, everyone communicates using their own devices, so that a multilingual conference platform is required to simulate conferences, such as the platform described above. This incurs costs for the educational institution, unless the owners of the platform grant it to the institution free of charge. This can also be an investment on their part in the future, as it is very likely that the present interpreter trainees will enter the market and interpret on such platforms. Just as the developers of translation software generously support students of translation in higher education and grant them free licences, this is hopefully the way it will be in the world of interpreting platforms in the future.

3.3.2 Devices and internet

The importance of smooth technology has been mentioned several times above. In remote education, the responsibility lies with the individual participants, and many were struck by the changes the lockdown brought, lacking fast and stable internet, computers, cameras and/or microphones, which caused disruptions in the transmission. Sometimes the presenter was difficult to hear; the internet at home was not strong enough to transmit a camera image; or someone at a conference dropped out of the system several times for reasons unknown. As the weeks went by, the technical background at home was getting better, everyone did what they could for the success of the conferences. In general, the period of remote education forced participants to make great technical progress. Those with no or limited devices and internet were obviously in a disadvantaged position. Professional technical background and technical competence (EMT 2017) are of particular importance in the work of language mediators, and those who are reluctant to learn about the use of new tools and platforms are hardly able to cope with the challenges of the interpreting market of the future.

Another important argument for the development of our digital tools is the emergence of the digital booth in interpreting, as advocated by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Interpretation[2]. In their view, in the future, interpreters will not carry paper-based glossaries, accompanying texts to the booth,

[2] https://ec.europa.eu/education/knowledge-centre-interpretation/digital-booth_en

while all information will be available in digital form. A tablet is recommended for use inside the booth, as this avoids typing noise and the buzzing of the laptop fan.

3.3.3 Reconciliation with the camera, microphone and bookcase

In professions such as teaching or interpreting, one must accept one's face and voice, and this often proves to be a challenge during the training. The use of microphones and the experience of the sound amplified by the microphone are also sensations to get used to. In the virtual world, it's no different. Some people prefer to speak through the camera or microphone, while others are paralysed by virtual presence, suffer from stage fright, and feel uneasy in this environment. When being present in class, we can keep eye contact, see each other's hands, postures, and hear the nuances of the voice of the speaker, and evaluate the situation on this basis. At an interpreted event, in attendance mode, the interpreter sees participants similarly and is present in communication, although his position is already difficult due to delayed or no feedback (Szabari 1999). The situation in interpreter training can be even more frustrating, as trainees usually do not have a history of successful events and satisfied customers. The virtual situation further increases tension and, in a good case, enhances the student's frustration tolerance (Horváth 2015), resulting from the delay, the lack of glances reflecting the understanding of the interpretation. Several students mentioned that because of the stripped nature of the virtual communication situation, they often felt as if they were interpreting for the bookcase. In such cases, it can be helpful to imagine the audience, who understands the important message of the presentation only because of the interpreter's professional rendering of the message.

3.3.4 Fatigue

Research into remote interpretation (e.g. Moser-Mercer 2003, Braun 2014, Mouzourakis 2003 cf. Horváth 2015) discusses the phenomenon of fatigue. Simultaneous interpretation is an exhausting activity requiring high concentration even without the distance. It is no coincidence that 2 or 3 interpreters in a booth alternate between each other every 20-30 minutes during a conference. For interpreter trainees, whose interpretation process requires even more effort and is less automated, fatigue sets in sooner. This should be taken into account when planning tasks and handovers.

4. Conclusion, methodological and research proposals for the future

It can be seen from the description that in the second half of the spring semester, owing to the lockdowns, our interpreters faced a very advanced task, which they carried out to the best of their ability. Since they had been practising for several

months at the time restrictions came in and were at the phase of deepening their interpreting skills, the task was doable for them, although obviously it was more stressful and required more effort than a semester in the traditional mode would have demanded. With their degree in hand, they can already say that they have remote interpretation and remote conference experience, and they have already used a remote conference platform. It is also desirable for conference interpreters to receive their degrees with such experience in the future, but it is hoped that course planners and instructors can decide on the percentage of attendance and distance, rather than being forced to do distance training.

In the last chapter, I would like to look at the areas in which we need to change the education practice in order to effectively bridge the forced physical distance in education caused by restrictions. The focus of my study is the teaching of simultaneous interpretation, which occupies a very special place in the field of distance education, but my conclusions can be applied to various other fields in education. The development proposals concern the ICT skills of teachers and students, the infrastructure of educational institutions, training students for distance learning and future research directions.

4.1 Introduction to the world of information communication technology

Educational institutions already had learning management systems before the pandemic, such as Kréta in Hungarian public education, and ETR and Neptun in higher education. Many instructors, teachers have used digital interfaces for education, such as Moodle, Google Classrooms or YouTube. However, users differed greatly in their digital skills and in the proportion of use (from just mandatory to broad exploitation of opportunities). Digitalisation and digital literacy in education and the world of work will continue to play an even greater role in the future. As a prerequisite for a high level of reading and writing skills for intellectual work, digital literacy is expected to be mandatory in the future, which means designing digital courses, preparing materials, uploading them, assessing students digitally. In the future, the transfer of knowledge through digital channels may also be part of the expected teaching skills. It would therefore be necessary to immediately train and retrain teachers.

4.2 Institutional context

The training and retraining proposed in the previous paragraph is not a novelty in higher education. Krajcso (2020) describes how, for example, the University of Vienna has prepared for distance learning by building infrastructure, creating a technical support background, and training teachers in several phases since 2003. Following best practices this professional background for distance education should also be created in Hungary, as the importance of digital frameworks will increase rather than diminish in the future.

4.3 Student coaching

The above two paragraphs concerned the changes and developments to which non-digital indigenous institutions and educators need to switch in the future. However, the majority of students now enrolled in higher education are digital natives, so the use of digital devices will not pose a problem for them. With the introduction of distance education, students had to learn about the platforms used for interpreting. Canvas has already been in use, although for fewer tasks, such as uploading glossaries and self-reflections. In distance education, Canvas was the platform for asynchronous education where voice or video recordings of speeches were uploaded, and students could upload their interpretations. The other was the platform for synchronous tasks, KUDO.

The affective aspect of distance learning on digital channels also deserves attention, as it has a major impact on the effectiveness of learning (Näykki 2019). In addition to technical changes, however, students had to be mentally and psychologically attuned to the distance and cope with the frustration caused by isolation, exhaustion and doubt (see Seresi's results in this volume). In my opinion, the effectiveness of courses can be improved by communicating with students about these topics and sharing ideas and strategies that make it easier to cope with negative emotions associated with distance learning. The function of the learning management system forum can be a good tool for discussing such a topic.

4.4 Wild cards in the future

Future researchers refer to low-probability, high-impact events as wild cards. In our globalised world more attention should be paid to wild cards, as coping with them may be the key to survival in the future. The recent decades have been characterised by incredibly rapid technological developments, and events in recent months have increased this pace even further, at the level of countries, institutions, households and individuals. The unexpected situation required rapid adaptation from all. In its proposals, AIIC encourages interpreters to consider the minimum conditions under which they accept a remote assignment. Interpreters can also be taken by surprise at a live event, but in the remote mode, all by themselves, sitting in front of their computers, they have to solve the unexpected, surprising situations alone, so they may not be able to perform the task at the standard often of no fault of their own to which they are accustomed when physically present at an event.

I am sure that carrying out and teaching remote interpreting will raise even more questions in the future and will inspire a number of studies. The teaching of remote interpreting will undoubtedly gain more ground in the future of interpreter training. It would be worth exploring the characteristics of remote interpreting in educational and real life settings, and how working conditions can be optimised for the location of participants. It needs to be further explored by what strategies, self-coaching tools the interpreters can support themselves in the isola-

tion of the virtual booth, and what the right balance is between internet contact with colleagues and controlling the extreme multitasking due to the remote interpretation situation. In the meantime, we can consider the digital tools we have been forced to use as an added value and hope that our work, studies and lives will be more predictable in the future than they have been in recent months.

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Teaching subtitling technology in distance learning settings

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Abstract: Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the audiovisual translator and professional translator postgraduate specialist training course of ELTE had to be continued as a distance learning course. There is no other accredited audiovisual course in Hungary and the postgraduate course itself is quite new, only in its second year in 2019/2020. The new situation posed a number of challenges, especially in the technology-oriented subtitling technology course. In this article, I review the existing literature regarding the online training of subtitlers, and I present the new methods we had to implement to accommodate the change to online training, the programs and platforms we used and the experiences of the students and the teachers.

Keywords: audiovisual translation, subtitling, teaching subtitling, distance learning, online education

1. Introduction

The unprecedented change from contact teaching to online distance learning due to the Covid-19 pandemic posed new challenges and offered new experiences for all types of courses. Fortunately, distance learning has not been completely unknown for the teachers working in the Department of Translation and Interpreting, as the department has been holding distance learning courses for translators for years now. The situation was more difficult for the courses where distance learning has not been conducted before. This was the case in the audiovisual translator and specialised translator postgraduate course which is a relatively new course, being only in its second year in 2019/2020.

Due to the novelty of the course and the fact that it has been based solely on contact teaching, our situation was especially challenging when the change to distance learning was announced in March 2020. On some courses, the change has been easier than on others. During the second semester of this 2-semester course, the students had modules on dubbing and subtitling, audiovisual translation project work, thesis consultation and subtitling technology. In the case of the first three modules mentioned above, the change posed less difficulties, since these modules mostly build on the autonomous work of the students, and the teachers' main task

is to provide guidance and assess their work. Feedback can be given easily through email or video chat services, therefore we were able to continue these courses without much disturbance in distance learning settings. More proactivity and flexibility has been expected from the students, but the syllabus of the modules did not need serious amendments.

The most challenging task has been the adaptation of the subtitling technology module to distance learning. The course is devised to develop skills needed for the use of subtitling softwares and technologies, not to develop the translational skills of the students. The students had to complete complex technical tasks instead of traditional translations. As teachers, we also had to use new technologies and softwares, and had to devise new methods to cover the curriculum and to assess the work of the students. In the following, I will present this process after a short overview of the history of the online teaching of subtitling in Translation Studies.

2. The technical dependence of teaching subtitling

Subtitling is the most widely used audiovisual translation method. It is the one most dependent on technology, and requires the highest level of technical skills from the translator.

The preparation as well as the translation of subtitles is carried out with specialised subtitling softwares. These softwares can open an already time-coded subtitle, the template. Templates are provided for the translator by the dubbing/subtitling studio in the source language of the subtitled movie, although nowadays it is often a relay template in English even when the source language is not English. In addition to the template, the subtitling software can also open the movie to which the template has been timed to. In certain subtitling softwares it is possible to use translator mode, which means that the translator can see the words of the template in one column and can write the translation into a second column. The video appears in a small window, and the subtitles appear on it according to the time codes, so the translator can see the placement, the format and the size of the subtitles during work.

In addition to that, the translator can manage the subtitling preferences of a specific assignment, e.g. the maximum and minimum duration of a subtitle, reading speed, maximum number of characters per line, minimum break needed between two subtitles. The subtitling software alerts the translator if a subtitle does not adhere to the previously defined preferences. Although it is possible to translate a subtitle without the use of a subtitling software (as a .txt text file, for example), the functions available in subtitling softwares make the work of the translator much more efficient. Today, most of the dubbing studios and subtitling companies require the translators to use some kind of subtitling software, therefore it is unavoidable to teach the use of such softwares in a subtitling course. According to Batrina (2009: 230) "[w]hen teaching subtitling online, it is essential to work with digital

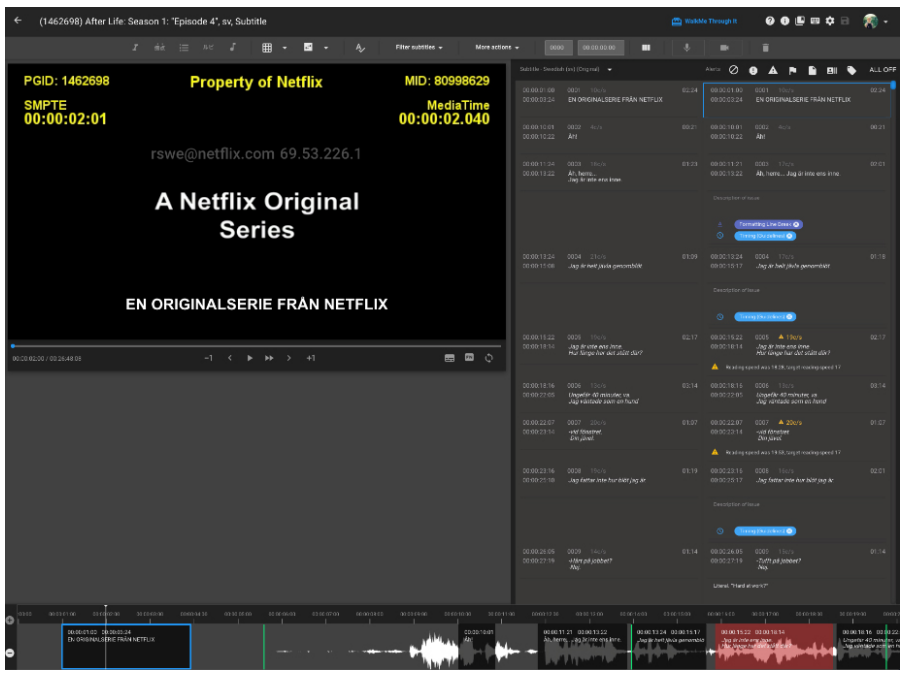
subtitling programs because they emulate the working conditions of professional subtitlers in the contemporary market."

However, it is a recurring problem in teaching audiovisual translation that professional subtitling softwares are expensive, and they usually don't offer licences for educational purposes either (Batrina 2009). In some cases, universities develop their own subtitling software or interface to get around this problem. This, however, is a time- and money-consuming procedure, which could be considered only in the long-term and in the cases of distance learning courses, not during an unexpected change to distant leaning due to a global pandemic.

In real life, translators usually work with the software provided by the studio, or on cloud-based, online subtitling interfaces which are getting more and more popular nowadays. The advantage of the latter is that there is no need to send the template and the video to the translator, as they are accessible on the subtitling interface. Also it is possible for the client to add notes to the subtitles, and they can also build translation memory in the cloud. This is the modus operandi of the subtitling interface of Netflix (Picture 1). Such online interfaces are protected by copyright law, and can't be used for educational purposes without the express authorisation of the company.

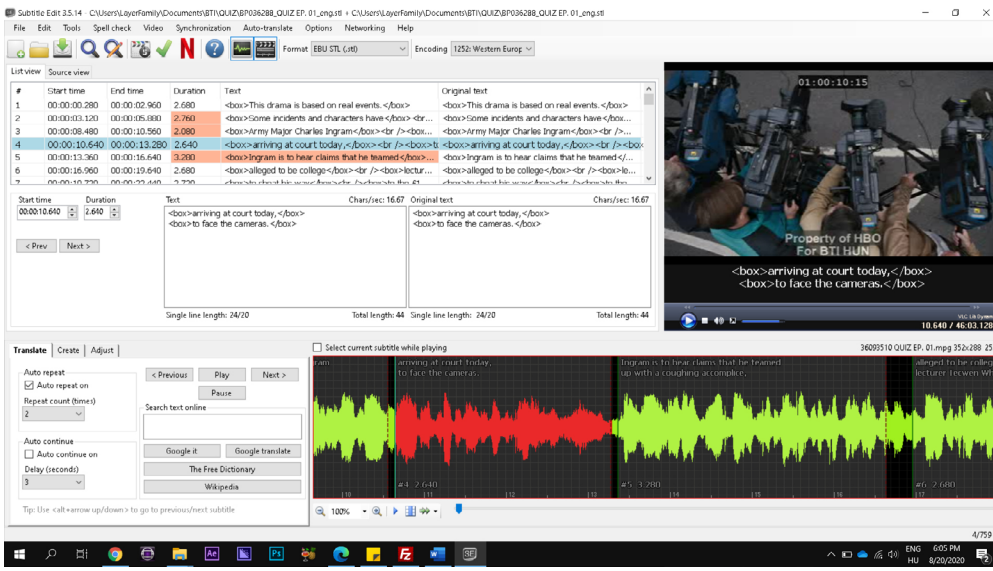
Picture 1

The online subtitling interface of Netflix (from the web page of Netflix)



Therefore, the first challenge during a subtitling course is to pick the most appropriate subtitling software. Fortunately, nowadays there are many well-developed free softwares available that work similarly to professional softwares and only lack a few high-level functions. On the course at ELTE we have chosen Subtitle Edit (Picture 2). It is an easy-to-use, simple software that has many functions, and has the advantage of a built-in translator mode as well. The choice has been supported by the fact that one of the largest studios dealing with subtitling in Hungary recommends this free software for its freelance translators.

Picture 2
Translator mode in Subtitle Edit



All of Subtitle Edit's functions are available in a free version, it does not need large memory space on the computer, so the students could download and install it on their personal computers at the beginning of the semester. The program was also installed on the computers of the department.

3. Teaching subtitling in an online environment

Teaching subtitling in an online environment is not a new concept. In Spain, a leading country in audiovisual translator trainings, more than one distance learning and online course have been available for years, all of them having modules in subtitling as well (Igareda & Matamala 2011). Batrina (2009) speaks in detail about the difficulties that the virtual environment poses in the teaching of subtitling. According to her, "[i]n distance learning, the relationship between student and teach-

er has to be reinforced with specific tools like forums, chats and frequent interaction via e-mail." (ibid: 233). Still, in her study she mentions skills that are not specific to distance learning. They are related to students having to utilise what they have learnt in a virtual environment, therefore she does not provide guidance on how to pass on the know-how for using subtitling softwares in such a virtual environment.

According to her, using a digital software develops the following skills:

- Quick adaptation to changing subtitling software.
- Adaptability to real world constraints and priorities.
- Control of all the stages in the subtitling process.
- Professional documentation skills for online resources.

(Batrina 2009: 237)

The above skills can undoubtedly be developed by using subtitling softwares during a course, but such skills can be developed when the use of the software is presented during contact classes, and the students then work on specific tasks at home using the software. From this perspective, Batrina's study does not provide methodological guidance for the development of an online curriculum.

A more helpful study is that of Bartoll & Orero (2008). In their definition, "[o]nline learning – or e-learning – is a complex format where digital technology and communication are exploited to create a learning environment where learning material can be downloaded, but it is also interactive" (ibid: 105). Their study builds upon the experiences they gathered from the online subtitling course of Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, which had been in operation for 6 years at the time of their study.

On this course, communication between students and teachers is possible synchronously and asynchronously as well. It is important to provide a similar, real-time mode for communication, if the students are accustomed to contact lessons, and did not expect a distance learning setting - as was the case at ELTE. Teachers have to be available, so the students won't feel disconnected, which might impact their motivation negatively. At Barcelona, teachers held online consultations for the students, who had to cover a new topic at home each week. The students had to prepare a related task at home, and their work was assessed on a weekly basis. At Barcelona, however, translational problems took up a larger part of the curriculum, while at the subtitling technology module of ELTE, technical questions had a more prominent role. On the course at ELTE, students have a separate class focusing on the translational questions of subtitling, while the subtitling technology course is more focused on the use of subtitling technologies and softwares.

Building on McIsaac & Gunawardena (1996), Amador et al. (2004) define four types of important interactions in distance learning. Between the student and the teacher, the teacher's task is related to motivation, providing feedback and personal guidance. In distance learning, it can be realised by making the necessary information available for the students, orienting the learning process with specific

tasks and being available for personal consultation if the students have questions or problems. As opposed to classroom learning, in distance learning the management of the learning process and scheduling becomes the responsibility of the students, and they are expected to be more proactive by seeking out the teacher for help, if it is needed - which might be easier in the classroom. Amador et al. (2004) lists specific tasks and connects them to the various online communicational interfaces. According to that, the main task of the teacher is to make the information needed for the completion of the task available, answer related questions, assess the work of the students, and have online meetings through weekly chats or video conferences.

The second type of interaction is between the student and the study material. The material should be developed in a form that can be easily used by the students, and it has to be logical and appropriate for the aim of the course.

The third type of interaction is the interaction between the students. In a distance learning setting it is advisable to encourage the students to work together on projects. Teamwork has developmental qualities, and in the case of distance learning, it helps to ease the feeling of isolation. From this point of view, it helped a lot that at the start of the global pandemic, the students of the course had been studying together for more than six months, so they kept active contact after the change to distance learning, shared their experiences and helped each other in the completion of weekly tasks. During the semester, they worked together on the audiovisual translation project module as well, and they prepared the whole Hungarian script of a voice-over documentary, a dubbed episode from a series, and the Hungarian subtitle of an edutainment program.

According to McIsaac & Gunawardena (1996) the most crucial interaction in the case of distance learning is the one between the students and the technology. In order to ensure the success of the course, the students have to be able to use the accessible interfaces and technological systems. It is possible that these skills are less developed in classroom learning, but it becomes necessary in distance learning. The development of technological skills is undoubtedly one of the advantages of distance learning, since the students had to download, install and use the needed softwares on their own computers in their own home.

4. Migrating the subtitling technology module into the online environment

During the second semester of the audiovisual translator and specialised translator course of ELTE in 2020, nine students were active in the subtitling technology course. We had two contact classes at the beginning of the semester. These were introductory classes, the classes focusing on practical tasks followed during the pandemic, after distance learning had been introduced.

The course covered the following topics:

1. Introduction, subtitles in general, types of subtitling softwares
2. Introduction to Subtitle Edit
3. Revision of a faulty source language template
4. Preparation of a template from source language script
5. Preparation of translated subtitle from a dubbing script
6. Preparation of dubbing script from subtitle
7. Subtitling a foreign movie in an unknown language through English relay subtitle into Hungarian
8. Splitting and joining subtitles, other editing techniques
9. Rehearsal exam
10. Exam
11. Group assessment of the semester's work

As mentioned before, during the course we used the free Subtitle Edit software. At the beginning of the semester, all students installed the program on their own computer or laptop. For the tasks they needed to complete at home, they usually needed a video file and a subtitle template in English. (All the tasks during the semester were from English to Hungarian). The necessary files were always uploaded to a Google Drive folder. The main mode of communication was through emails. Due to the small number of students within the group, we deemed it the more practical way of keeping contact. The students received their weekly instructions through group emails.

Although the instructions for the weekly tasks were not overly complicated, it was a bit more difficult to find a way for showing the students the use of the necessary functions within the software. In video conference programs (e.g. Microsoft Teams, Zoom) it is possible to share the screen, so the students can see on their own computer where the teacher clicks when doing a certain task, and they can hear the instructions as well, but they can't use their own software at the same time if they don't have two screens for their computer. If we used this method, they would have to take notes and replicate the process in their own software later on. This did not seem the most efficient solution, so I looked for other possibilities.

The solution came in the form of a software called Flashback Pro. The program can record what we do on our computer while also recording an audio track - the instructions of the teacher in that case. The licence is available at a reduced price for teachers of educational institutions, and it is a very good fit for educational purposes. Recording double screen is also an option, which can be useful if we want to show the speaker as well as the presentation he or she talks about. It has easy-to-use video editing functions as well, and we can record a new audio track for an existing video too. Its interface is very user friendly and can be mastered in a short time.

The software worked really well all through the semester, and with it the new setup for distance learning could be finalised. The students received a short email every week about the new topic and about where to find the related material in the

course's Google Drive folder. Each week I recorded a video in which I showcased the process needed for the weekly task in Subtitle Edit. The video showed the window of Subtitle Edit (and the windows of other programs needed for the specific task) I used on my own computer while I completed a similar task to the one given out to the students. The video's audio track consisted of my own voice giving instructions and notes on the task and the process. Students received the related video each week beside the written instructions for the weekly task. I aimed to write detailed and precise instructions. In addition, I uploaded for the first class a Word document I prepared in which I compiled the most important functions and short-keys of Subtitle Edit, as well as the main terms related to subtitling (timing, spotting, time code, reading speed etc.) in English and in Hungarian.

The students had 5 days to complete the weekly task, and they had to upload their prepared files into their own Drive folder. I downloaded those and corrected them. After the revision of their work, I usually sent a group email listing the most common errors and the things they have to be more careful of in the future. In some cases, that was enough, but in other cases I also sent a personal feedback to each of the students.

In addition, I started a chat group where the students could ask their questions any time. I was always available at the scheduled time of the class, so if the students had new questions, they received their answer immediately. The chat was available for all students, that way we could avoid the same questions being asked over and over again. The students used the chat actively, and many relevant questions were discussed here during the semester. Of course, students could reach out to me directly in email, if they did not want to pose a question in the group chat.

At the end of the semester, the students first had the opportunity to do a mock exam. For this, I uploaded a subtitle which had to be partly translated, and the faults in its timing and segmentation had to be corrected. The task was similar to the one they had to do a week later as a final exam, but they had a week to do the mock exam, and they could ask for help if they got stuck. The mock exam was not compulsory, but most of the students completed it anyway, and many questions were raised during the course of the week. The exam was good preparation for the final exam, and helped bring uncertainties to the surface. The students deemed the rehearsal exam very useful, especially as they were not allowed to ask questions during the actual exam and they had to prepare for it in a fixed amount of time.

At the end of the semester, the students had to work on the actual exam. The task was the proofreading of a subtitle, in which the students had to amend the timing, join and split subtitles as well as translate some parts of the text. The task included each topic covered throughout the semester. I uploaded the materials at the time of our lesson, and the students had 2 hours to send back the corrected subtitle. The time constraint ensured that they completed the task on their own, without checking everything in the semester's study material.

For the last week we held a Zoom video conference, where the students could share their experiences of the semester and ask any remaining questions. Accord-

ing to the feedback of the students, most of them had a positive assessment of the module. Many emphasised the usefulness of the guide videos. They appreciated that the recordings were downloadable and could be consulted at a later time, so they were able to start their homework whenever they wanted to, and could check the instructions in the video when needed. They all said that they would save the material for the future, as they might be useful when working on real-life work assignments. They deemed the communication appropriate, they felt that they received answers for all of their questions. The only negative aspect they mentioned was the lack of a common experience, the atmosphere of real-time group work.

From an educational point of view, the course was successful. Based on the work of the students on the exam it turned out that they were able to master the most important functions of Subtitle Edit through distance learning. As a teacher, I myself mastered and employed new methods which might be useful in the future should a similar situation arise, or during the development of a distance learning audiovisual translation course as well. It would be advantageous if the numerous functions could be compiled on one interface, but it would probably be possible only with extensive IT development.

5. Conclusion

Based on one semester it can be said that it is not impossible to work out an online teaching curriculum for a mostly technology-oriented course, but it definitely needs the appropriate softwares and the co-operation of the students. Although the distance learning setting might be detrimental to the student's motivation (mostly because of the distance from the other students and the feeling of isolation), it might have its advantages in the development of certain skills. Students have more authority over their time, therefore their time management skills have developed. They had to use the softwares and online interfaces autonomously, and they had to be more proactive. In a classroom setting, it often happens that a few active students ask all the questions, while others simply stay in the background. In distance learning, staying in the background is less of an option.

However, we can't disregard the disadvantages of distance learning either. Learning from each other is definitely less possible, and as teachers, we see less of the development of the students, and the topics discussed are definitely more limited. In a classroom setting, questions lead to other questions, interactions are usually more lively and more topics might be introduced into the discourse. During distance learning, the compilation of study material rests solely upon the teacher, and the students have less opportunity to influence the weekly study content. As a result, the material might be less suitable for the students' actual needs. In classroom settings, it is evident which topics are easier and harder for the group, and the teacher might amend the time spent on a certain topic accordingly. In distance learning it is a more limited option.

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Final examinations in distance mode

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Abstract: The students on our MA and postgraduate specialist training courses at the Department of Translation and Interpreting of Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) normally complete their studies with a final exam where they appear in person. However, due to the pandemic in the second half of the spring semester in 2020, the courses were conducted in distance learning mode, as were the final exams. Distance examinations posed a new challenge to both students and trainers, and as a result participants gained new experience and learned new methodological lessons. The present study describes the background, circumstances, and technicalities of the exams organised in distance mode at the Department of Translation and Interpreting of ELTE. At the end of the chapter, the conclusions are drawn, with special regard to the lessons we can make use of later on in future exams where we are all physically present again.

Keywords: distance education, final exam, translation specialisation, interpreting specialisation, EMCI

1. Introduction

The day of the final exam is a big day in the life of every university student, as this is the culmination of their studies, the last door leading to their degree. Typically, a great deal of excitement and lots of preparation precedes the day of the exam. Master's students of the Department of Translation and Interpreting at Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) take their final exam either in interpreting or translating, depending on their specialization choice. In the case of translators, the preparation involves studying the review of their MA thesis, answering the questions of the reviewer, preparing a list of examples for grammar points in their mother tongue, studying the compulsory literature and preparing for the topics of the final examination. In the case of interpreters, preparation also involves reacting to the review on the thesis, but in addition to answering the reviewer's questions, interpreting tasks in the directions of BA, AB and CA is also a practical part of the final exam. The final exams of the European Masters in Conference Interpreting (EMCI) course usually take place at the end of the academic year in the same period as the master-level courses, however, the requirements and methods of the examination differ somewhat from the MA interpreter's final exam.

In the 2019/2020 academic year, the final exams were made even more challenging by the outstanding fact that, in view of the health emergencies caused by the new type of Covid virus, Eötvös Loránd University switched entirely to distance education from 23 March 2020, and then on 21 April 2020 the Epidemiological Operative Coordinating Body of the University published its guidelines on exams, including the final examinations held in distance mode. In this study, we present the background, practicalities and lessons learned in the final examinations held at the Department of Translation and Interpreting at ELTE, and draw the conclusions, in particular those which may later be useful during examinations with a personal presence. First, we present the lessons of the MA translation final exams, then the details of the MA interpreters' final exams, and finally the specifics and lessons learned from the examinations of the EMCI students.

2. Final examinations in the MA course

The Epidemiological Operative Coordinating Body at ELTE, following the instructions of Government Decree 101/2020. (IV.10.) concerning higher education, published its communication on exams and tests in distance learning mode on 21 April 2020, including the organisation of final examinations in the distance mode. The annex to the communication included an addition to the Regulations of Training and Examination for distance learning. On 8 May, in order to establish the principles of uniform and predictable education, Interim Regulations of Training and Examination were published, which had been prepared and discussed by the faculty representatives and the students' governing body. This created a completely new situation for students, teachers and the staff of the university. In the past 6 years in the Department of Translation and Interpreting, distance learning courses regularly ended with a final examination with personal participation. However, our experience with distance education since March 2020 prepared the way for the examinations so that all students could complete their studies under examination conditions that are fully compatible with transparent, legal and ethical aspects (Bereczki et al. 2020b).

2.1. Questions

Attendance examinations are also preceded by countless student questions. Each detail is of great importance, and this was exponentially true in the preparation for the distance final exams. The questions focused, among others, on applications to be used in the exam, on the examination procedure, on the documents to be presented, on the method of drawing an examination topic, on the length of speeches to be interpreted, on the speakers, on the person of the evaluators, on the order of the tasks, and the question of how this final exam will be different compared to the previous ones. In addition to all this, the question of "what if…" was often raised, i.e. how the

exam continued if one party could not hear the others, or could not be seen or heard. What happens if the connection is lost and cannot be immediately restored?

The university's Interim Regulations of Training and Examination for distance education mentioned above – providing detailed information on the theoretical and practical aspects of the exams – provided help in answering the questions and organising the examinations. The teaching staff was further guided by the methodological aid for the evaluation of student performance in the distance system published by the Faculty of Education and Psychology (PPK) of ELTE (Bereczki et al. 2020a, 2020b). The recommendations made by the experts placed great emphasis on the detailed information for students on the process, time frame and conditions of the exams, and drew attention to the fact that unusual situations and uncertainty could cause increased tension and anxiety for students. Therefore, the teachers and staff of the department tried to answer the above questions as accurately as possible and to work out the details of the final examinations, in particular with regard to the technology to be used during the exam.

2.2. Technology

The Faculty of Humanities (BTK) of ELTE proposed primarily asynchronous solutions as opposed to the controlled oral examination on the Internet. There were several reasons for this: the emergence of possible technical problems, the continuous work of the examiners before the monitor, and the anxiety and loss of performance due to the online visualisation and sound of students (Bereczki et al. 2020b). However, since the real-time practical nature of the interpreter's final examinations had already ruled out the possibility of taking a written examination, we decided to organise an oral final exam in an online synchronous manner for all courses of the Department of Translation and Interpreting (translator, interpreter and EMCI), ensuring fairness and equal opportunities in the exams.

For the exam, we used the Zoom webinar application we had gained experience with during the period of distance education, and we made sure that, in addition to holding live lessons, it is suitable for performing online consecutive interpreting in student groups, pairs and individually. As technical conditions play an important role in the distance examination situation, experience with the chosen application greatly facilitated the work of the participants, and the familiar application also contributed to the self-confidence of the students.

An extremely important prerequisite for online work is that participants have a well-functioning computer, internet, camera and microphone. In distance education, we have already experienced that shortcomings in this field make work very difficult, so we reminded everyone before the final exams of the importance of a solid technical background and the fact that during a communication event such as interpreting, it is important that the speaker's face be clearly illuminated and visible.

We would also like to briefly address possible technical problems. As early as April 2020, the university issued the following on the subject:

> When a technical problem arises – especially if the image or sound is blocked, communication is not comprehensible, or the internet connection is interrupted – the committee always initiates a new call in the direction of the student and attempts to continue the final exam, the students themselves do not make a call. The Committee shall make at least two attempts to do so. Between the two attempts to make calls, at least five minutes should pass. The interruption of the technical link and the attempt to call again shall be recorded in the minutes. If the Internet connection which has been interrupted before the examination or during the examination is not restored, a member of the committee shall telephone the examinee and tell them that at the end of the exam day they will try to call again. If this fails, a member of the committee calls the examinee on the telephone and asks them to consult with the Department for the new date. After redistribution, the Department shall notify the Study Office and the Office shall ensure that the new minutes are drawn up for the new examination as indicated by the department. (ELTE BTK Student guide for oral and final examinations, point 16).

About a week before the exam day, examiners and students took part in a trial call to make sure that the application worked, and to answer the remaining questions and clarify examination procedures. On the morning of each exam day, before the examination began, we made another test call to make sure that the participants can check if the program, sound and image transmission work properly. In this way, we tried to ensure the preparation of the participants for the final exam and the smooth running of the exam. In addition, from 4 P.M. on each exam day, the department kept a repetition period free so that any technical problems would not cause any interruption in the exam schedule. The technical aspects of the exam, i.e. the operation of the videoconferencing software, the invitation, notification of students and the management of electronic documents were carried out by the secretary of the three-person examination committees.

3. Translation specialisation

Although the tasks of the translator's final examinations do not include practical tasks similar to the interpreter exam, our department decided to follow the best practice of the previous years and hold an oral exam. However, instead of personal attendance, the final exam was organised by means of an internet video conference. The translation final exam is important from the viewpoint of the evaluation of the students' work, as the average of the grades received for the different parts of the exam gives the final qualification grade of the degrees. This is the reason why it was important to give them the opportunity to defend their theses, answer the questions of the reviewer and present the exam topics to the committee after having prepared for it carefully.

3.1. The task

The first task of the translation exam was the defense of the thesis[1]. The translator candidate had to present the text chosen for their thesis translation and answer the reviewer's three questions about their thesis, which the reviewer had sent in advance. The possibility of a deeper exchange of views on the subject, as in examinations with a personal presence, was not possible. The examination board tried to conduct the exams with as few delays as possible and in a calm atmosphere, so as not to exacerbate the stress caused by the distance exam (Bereczki et al.2020b). The examinee had to present one of ten topics for Hungarian language and style based on their list of examples from translation. Finally, out of five mandatory readings, they had to report on the book chosen by the chair of the committee. The examinees could use their notes for this task. In this presentation, students had to focus on and discuss what they had found interesting in the book, and not simply recite its contents.

3.2. The course of the exam

In accordance with the university's temporary studies and examinations regulations for distance education, the translators' final examination took place with a committee of two members, the chair of the exam and the student's thesis supervisor. In addition to the chair and the supervisor, the secretary of the committee was present, who, beside keeping the minutes, carried out the organizational and technical tasks of the online examinations, ensuring that students and examiners can focus exclusively on the examination, the replies and evaluation.

Students were previously invited to upload their assignments to their folders in the cloud-based storage of the department. These were the assignments involved in the final exam, namely the thesis, written answers to the reviewer's questions, and Hungarian language examples, i.e. the written material that is usually presented to the members of the examination committee in printed form during the final examinations. In general, it is not necessary to draw up answers to the reviewer's questions in writing for final examinations with personal attendance, but due to the new situation, it was not foreseeable what technical problems or possible delays we would have in the exam, so in the spirit of fairness and equality at the exams, we decided to ask the students in advance for the answers. In this way, each examinee had to answer every question, but the committee could opt for asking one question only in order to manage the time properly. At the same time, students were given the opportunity to change their responses to the reviewer's questions at the exam. The contents of the students' folders were only accessible to the members of the

[1] Students who finish their MA at our department in the translation specialisation hand in an MA thesis 3 months prior to their closing exam. The thesis includes the BA translation of a text of ca. 30 000 n, written by native speakers of the B language, not older than 5 years. Beside the translation, the thesis should include an introduction, closing remarks, a terminology list of 20 items and a list of translation-related comments by the translator.

examination board, ensuring that students' data was protected. The secretary of the committee also uploaded the reviews on the theses before the exam.

On the morning of the exam day, before the examinations started, the secretary opened the videoconferencing site of the event for everyone, so that the participants of the exam could log in, making sure the application, the audio and video worked, as the final exam took place with cameras and microphones turned on. After checking the functions of the webinar application, everyone left except the examiners and the first examinee, and the exam began. The examinees were, following a pre-established schedule, invited first to the waiting room and then to the virtual examination room, where the chair, the thesis supervisor and the secretary were present along with the examinee.

After verifying the identity of the examinee and the introduction, the exam began with a brief presentation of the thesis, the examinee presented the topic and challenges of the translation. This was followed by a detailed explanation of the answers to the review questions, followed by the Hungarian language and style presentation. The topic of the language task was chosen by means of a random number generator operated by the secretary of the committee in such a way that it became visible on the shared screen for examiners and examinees as well. During the examination, the secretary opened the documents previously uploaded to the examinee's folder, thus making it easier to follow their line of thought. In the final part of the final exam, examinees talked about a book on translation chosen from the pre-defined list of mandatory readings.

The evaluation of the students' performance was carried out after every third student had completed the exam. When the exam finished, examinees were sent to a virtual waiting room, where they waited for the secretary to call them back in the exam room. While the students were waiting outside, the members of the committee discussed and evaluated the students' performance, and this was recorded by the secretary in the electronic record. Finally, the results were announced by the chair to the examinees, with personal evaluation and feedback, also giving the supervisor the opportunity to comment. After the congratulations, the exam ended for the students, while the members of the examination board continued the examinations.

3.3. Lessons learned

When it comes to the lessons of the final examinations carried out in online distance mode, the primary question that arises is whether there is any pedagogical advantage to online distance examinations over the presential mode. It is probably not possible to give a definitive answer to this question without extensive research and analysis, but we would nevertheless like to draw conclusions from the experience.

The final exam with a personal presence creates an indisputably closer relationship between the participants of the exam, there is no online medium through which the participants have to find their way, and there is no need to fear technical problems. The distance mode itself, as well as switching on the camera can indeed cause

increased tension and anxiety in the examinees (Bereczki 2020a, 2020b), which we tried to reduce by providing detailed information about the exam in accordance with university recommendations. At the same time, an examination situation is always stressful for examinees, whether in attendance or distance mode. That said, there are undeniable advantages for the student being able to take a test from their usual surroundings under home conditions with the help of a well-known software.

In the case of the translation final exams, the biggest difference this year was that students were able to upload all the tasks they had prepared in a shared folder (thesis, list of language examples, responses to the reviewer's questions), so that the members of the exam committee, especially the chair, could check everything in advance, and if necessary, even before the exam, they could provide feedback to the students who could make the requested changes in time. During the examination documents could be shared on the screen with all participants of the exam by using the online screen-sharing function of the application, so that the examiners were able to follow the student's replies better, ask further questions, and make the evaluation more accurate. We believe that this method allowed for intensified, deeper examinations, because the committee was not limited by the narrow time and space framework of the exam, we had more space and time to prepare for the examination. We saw more than what the student could perform verbally at the exam, as they uploaded their work to the cloud-based folder before the exam. The online exam thus added a new dimension to the practices of the examination.

In some respects, oral examinations on a distant online platform, with the help of shared documents, allowed for a fairer account than in the traditional attendance mode. If there was little time available because of the delays, the chair usually asked the examiner only one of the three questions posed in the review, but since all the answers in writing could be viewed in the shared folders, we could be sure that the student could answer all the questions; therefore, those who had to answer all three questions were not at a disadvantage. The random number generator used for drawing an exam topic also allows for more objective testing: no paper slips are made and folded, and the exam topic to be presented is not determined by the examiner, but all topics can be covered.

Overall, it can be concluded that while attendance examinations have many advantages, primarily of a human and personal nature, certain elements of the digital toolkit of online exams may also be included in the presence system examination (e.g. the uploading of documents). Digital and cloud-based devices can be included in the oral examination with personal participation, as this has become a widely accepted pedagogical method in education.

3.4. European Masters in Translation (EMT) – outlook

The Department of Translation and Interpreting of ELTE is the only institution in Hungary which is a member of the *European Masters of Translation* (EMT) network, one of the most prestigious translation training institutions in the EU. It is

thus worth taking a look at the distance examination practices of other EMT institutions. Similar to the variety in the handling of the virus, European universities also use varied solutions in examinations adapted to the changed circumstances.

According to the website of the University of Antwerp, there were no distance examinations, and electronic tests were administered at the university, with strict rules. Even mandatory pre-exam bathroom use was prescribed to the students, as this was not possible during the examination. The exam regulations were placed in front of the computer on a printed page for the examinees. After the exam, they had to leave the campus immediately. The Free University of Brussels (Université Libre de Bruxelles) continued its spring semester examinations in a hybrid form and announced an investment of EUR 900.000 to support infrastructure procurement and transform education.

In May, the James I University (Universitat Jaume I) in the south of Spain published a 77-page electronic manual with the pedagogical and methodological recommendations of distance examination. An interesting feature of the recommendation is that it proposes the use of only one framework that functions as a virtual classroom: the university's own system for examination purposes. It defines the description of exam tasks, discusses in detail the protocol of conduct, which is uniform at university level, as well as details such as the advantages and disadvantages of multiple-choice and essay questions in distance examination.

The University of Leiden in the Netherlands gave its teachers more freedom. The principles to be followed by students and teachers were included in a code of conduct. Oral examinations could be conducted by telephone and video. The leadership of the University of Leiden was flexible with regard to the platforms used: in addition to *Microsoft Teams* also used by ELTE, *Brightspace*, *ANS, Remindo, Blackboard, Kaltura Live Room*, *Proctorio* and *ProctorExam* were also recommended. The use of Zoom was prohibited for reasons of data security. The advantages of *Proctorio* and *ProctorExam* include the browser-based interface, end-to-end encryption and built-in cheating detector: before starting the written exam, the RoomCheck function of *ProctorExam* asks the examinee to rotate the webcam, thus checking there are no notes or smartphone left near the examinee. The program continuously and automatically monitors the tester's shared screen, webcam, and microphone, and, in the case of suspicious behaviour, sends a report on the incident. The report is reviewed by the software operators after the automatic notification, and if deemed justified, they send a report to the examiner, who may take the necessary steps.

IULM in Milan conducted exams for the spring semester in accordance with less stringent rules in *Microsoft Teams*. At the beginning of the exams students verified their identity and the exams were conducted in compliance with the rules.

Our closest EMT neighbour, the Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania, granted extensive educational freedom. According to the decision of the Rector's Office, the instructors could choose the most suitable platforms for themselves.

The European EMT outlook shows that there was no unified recommendation for the network's member institutions, and universities were free to choose how to

address the challenges of education in times of the pandemic, just as various distance learning and examination solutions can be found in the practice of Hungarian universities. Overall, it can be concluded that the individual institutions and instructors have demonstrated great flexibility and ingenuity, adapted to the challenges of the emergency situation and successfully completed the final examinations: by introducing rigorous regulations, e-examination, application of learning management systems and webinars – bearing in mind not only quality and feasibility, but also transparency, exam fairness and equal opportunities.

4. Interpreter specialisation

Due to restrictions for the control of the pandemic, interpreters' final examinations had to be held in distance mode as well. At the exam, the students' verbal communication performance and their consecutive interpreting competences are evaluated, in this case on the internet, through a computer application, using a camera and microphone.

As far as the authors know, there are few courses at the Faculty of Humanities for which synchronous connection is as important as it is for teaching and evaluating interpreting. Although the methodological support of the Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology (Bereczki et al 2020b) recommends using asynchronous methods in the first place, this would not have been a solution in our case.

It is also necessary to note here that in the Faculty of Humanities, passing the final exam successfully is not typically the biggest challenge, and the success rate of the final exams is high. On the other hand, this ratio is not usually 100 % in the interpreter's final exams. Since there is a practical final exam in the interpreter's specialisation, the stakes are very high. Thus, it is not uncommon for our students to do a re-sit for the final exam for the second or third time.

4.1. The task

The task was to interpret three 4-5 minute speeches in the language directions of BA, AB and CA. Speeches were 1 to 2 minutes shorter than in usual exams. The speeches were given by lecturers and native speakers, and they also evaluated the performance of the interpreters. During the term, we held mock exams, so we prepared students for the unusual exam situation and tried to alleviate their anxiety about it, as suggested in the PPK supplement (Bereczki et al. 2020b).

However, unlike in the pre-pandemic times, the students did not take the exam in all three language directions in one session, but rather on three occasions: a BA, an AB and an CA exam. Thus, online meetings were shorter, which, as we experienced, are more exhausting than the time spent together in real presence, and there were fewer members in the examination committees. The students defended their theses in the BA part of the exam.

4.2. The course of the exam

The exams were held taking into account the regulations of the university and the specificities of the course. Students received invitations to their university e-mail address from the exam board. Due to concerns about the security of the Zoom webinar application, we decided to send the link and password for the exam meeting to students in a separate email or Neptun[2] message. On two occasions, a few days before the exam, and before the beginning of the exam, we initiated a test call in which we discussed the issues and the most important information, such as:

- log in with all names (family and first name) so that we can identify you immediately, thus avoiding unauthorised access to the Zoom interface;
- for better image quality, please do not use Zoom from a smartphone;
- avoid the chat function during the exam (do not distract attention), use only in justified cases (e.g. to give more difficult or unknown names for exam speech);
- audio and image connections are mandatory on both sides, so everyone has to turn on the camera;
- in the event of a major delay, we'll notify everyone.

We asked for a check-in 15 minutes prior to the start of the exam, when the students were placed in Zoom's virtual waiting room, where they waited until the previous examinee left the interface and was called in by the secretary responsible for the technical organisation. Conducting the online exam requires a lot of patience from both teachers and students. For students, we recommended wearing headphones with microphones for better sound quality. We tested the sound quality with everyone before the exam speech was delivered. It was also important to have enough space in front of the students' computers so that they can take notes comfortably while listening to speeches.

The keywords of the exam text, the names, just like in the pre-pandemic exams, were given to the examinees before the speech, and the difficult names were written on the chat wall. The exam speech was selected at random using an internet program (https: //wheelofnames.com/).

The examination committee consisted of four members on average (president, native speaker, Hungarian-speaking interpreter, secretary). For the sake of a safer technical background, the committee logged in to Zoom from a joint university site on a single channel. Some teachers also joined online, but together with the examiner there were only three log-ins. Partly due to the preparation, we did not experience any serious technical problems at the exam.

We observed that in the case of some students, the online environment had a negative impact on performance, being more difficult to tackle the task than it had been live, while other students were in their element in this new mode, and it

[2] The learning management system used at Eötvös Loránd University.

seemed that online interpreting was a suitable task for them. The students' controlled, low stress levels at the examinations can be contributed to the experience gained during the semester and familiarity with the use of the platform.

4.3. Lessons learned

It is safe to say that the spring semester of 2020 has not convinced everyone that in the future it is worth switching to distance education and examinations instead of attendance training. However, with proper preparation and practice, interpreters can be trained and tested if necessary, as the successful acquisition of online communication is also in the interest of interpreters. In the future, a significant segment of interpretation assignments is expected to be carried out in distance mode (see Eszenyi's study in this volume), so it is safe to call this situation and the accompanying stress life-like. Becoming familiar with and exercising the functions of platforms suitable for interpreting can also be considered as gains.

The Zoom software we became familiar with in digital distance learning has a number of practical features that were previously provided by several different platforms. One of the best practices of the first interpreting lessons is that we make video recordings of the short spontaneous speeches given by the students, and then evaluate what we see on the basis of their presentation and rhetorical skills. This requires an external camera, a microphone and a player, as well as a projector. Zoom's video recording and saving function, as well as screen sharing, makes this possible within one platform. The analysis of presentation skills can therefore be done online without problems in the case of the reintroduction of distance education.

In the future, within a course, trainers will be able to schedule some online classes to practise new skills.

5. EMCI

The final exams of the EMCI (*European Masters in Conference Interpreting*) course were somewhat different from the final exams of the MA course. On the EMCI course, students receive training in consecutive and simultaneous interpreting for a year and focus on this in the final exam. Therefore, there is no need to write or defend a thesis. Regarding the online organisation of EMCI final exams, in the following we will focus on the elements that differed from the final examinations of master's students.

5.1. Planning the exam

The EMCI final exam takes place every year in the presence of an international committee and takes several days, as a finale to the entire year's high-level, dedicated work. After the individual results are announced on the last exam day, the

exam typically ends with a celebration, which is conducted outside the university walls in a more informal setting. However, in distance education, this ritualistic, festive feature of the event disappeared for several reasons.

Firstly, in order to save bandwidth, we asked for the minimum possible number of committee members for each examination day, and we did not invite the regular external examiners, such as colleagues from the European Union's interpreting services. Thus, the exam was conducted with the participation of the trainers and native speakers who gave the training, and examinees could only see them for a few minutes at the exam. Due to the distance mode of the exams, students could not wait in the corridor with their peers, thus the social element in the exam was missing.

On the other hand, due to the new implementation of simultaneous interpretation tasks (which will be reported on in more detail in the following section), the examination was longer than usual: it lasted a total of six days. Under these circumstances, we felt that it was not possible to wait until the final exam day with the announcement of results, so we informed the students twice each day of their partial results. This was in line with the university's Interim Regulations of Training and examination (Bereczki et al. 2020b). This innovation, in particular, meant a change from the point of view of those who failed one of the sub-tasks, so passing the other parts would still have resulted in an unsuccessful exam result. We also gave these students the opportunity to continue the exam as an opportunity to practise, but a significant majority did not use this. Consequently, the exam was not a common test ending with a solemn announcement of results, but a journey of different lengths for the individual students.

When preparing the exam schedule, it had to be taken into account that the asynchronous method used for simultaneous interpretation takes more time than the methods used in attendance exams. It also had to be borne in mind that, based on the experience of previous months, Zoom does not work so reliably in the afternoon time slot, as the hours of work in home office begin then overseas as well. Since the EMCI final exam is accompanied by a particularly high stress level, we decided that the task requiring synchronous connections, i.e. the completion of the consecutive interpreting task, would only be scheduled in the morning, while simultaneous interpretation tasks will take place after lunch.

5.2. The course of the exam

The consecutive part of the exam was no different from that of the MA interpreter's exams, although the speeches were somewhat longer and more complex. The specialty of the EMCI final exam was the solution we found for the simultaneous interpretation tasks.

In distance education, three methods of simultaneous interpretation were used parallel. One of the methods was completely asynchronous. The trainers and the native speakers uploaded the sound recordings of their speeches to Can-

vas[3], and the students also recorded their simultaneous interpretation and made them available to the trainers again on Canvas.

The second method used was a mixture of synchronous and asynchronous methods, thus simulating the real simultaneous interpretation situation. The way we did this was that while the instructors and the native speakers gave their speeches in real time with the camera on, the listeners instantly interpreted them while muting their microphones. Their interpretation was recorded with their phones and uploaded to Canvas at the end of the class.

For the third, synchronous method, we used the remote interpretation platform called Kudo, which was made available free of charge by the American start-up company that granted a free trial period to all European interpreting institutions participating in the EMCI network (see Eszenyi's writing in this volume). This generous offer was a great help and a great opportunity to practise during the term, but the trainers found that no remote interpretation platform is stable enough to give students a reassuring background under the stress of the EMCI final exam. Therefore, ironically, we decided to prepare the simultaneous interpretation of the final exam in semi-asynchronous mode.

For each exam day, we uploaded a link to a YouTube video recording of an exam speech on the Canvas interface that became visible at a given time for the students. We believed that the audio recording was not sufficient for students in the exam situation, they also needed visual information. Of course, we prepared extra speeches for every exam day, in case the task had to be restarted due to some technical hitch.

In the afternoon of the exam day, the students logged in to Zoom, so that the trainers who supervised the exam could be in visual contact with them and check what they were doing. They then individually opened the Canvas task on their own computer. When everyone found the video and made sure they could play it, the exam started. They began simultaneously interpreting the speech recorded in the video with their microphone switched off, but with a camera switched on, while their interpreting was recorded by their own phone. At the end of the task, the audio file was uploaded to the Canvas interface in MP3 format. When the supervisor could see all the students' audio files uploaded to the Canvas surface, the exam was over for the students.

It should be noted here that the exam regulations of the Faculty of Humanities of ELTE prohibit image or sound recording at exams, but simultaneous interpretation is an exception. At the current level of technological development we would not have had any other method that could have ensured that the student performed the task in a fairly stress-free, familiar situation, and the committee also had the opportunity to compare interpretation with the original speech. On the other hand, it should be stressed that the recordings were made and uploaded by the students

[3] The learning management system used by Eötvös Loránd University that enables the uploading of documents for courses.

themselves, so they were aware of recording taking place and had some control over it. Thirdly, this procedure was the same as the way we worked with them most of the time during the lockdown restrictions, so the task was familiar to them. The introduction of a new, fourth method at the final examination would have resulted in unnecessary complications and technical risks.

Needless to say a "dress rehearsal" was necessary for the smooth implementation. So we tested the system with all EMCI students taking exams and re-sits in the 2019/20 academic year, in two separate groups. This time, we also checked if the testers' technical tools are suitable for the task, and whether the trainers can play the file format of their voice recordings. Based on the experience there, we asked for the MP3 format from all examinees.

During both the rehearsal and the real exam, it was very important for the instructor virtually present to calm the examinees, who easily panicked in the event of a technical difficulty. It took more patience than usual to wait for everyone to find the right button, and so on.

When students checked out of the Zoom meeting, the trainers started a new meeting for the evaluation. The evaluation began when each examiner had watched the video of the original speech at the same time and took notes using the technique for consecutive interpreting. Then, one by one, we listened to the audio recordings of the students' interpreting while taking notes. After listening to the recordings, we discussed and evaluated the students' performance. When we had reached consensus about the grades, students were informed of our decision individually.

5.3. Lessons learned

The EMCI final exam requires very complex organisation even without a pandemic situation, and it is a very serious stress source for students. When this exam had to be conducted in the new framework of distance education, the first priority of the trainers was to provide students with the most appropriate conditions. So there wasn't much time left for research or meditation. Looking back, however, it is worth highlighting two factors, although this exceptional situation is worthy of a much more complex analysis.

The first factor that I would like to examine is the situation of the students who were resitting the exam. These students had completed EMCI training in previous years (up to 5 years earlier), but failed to pass the final exam at the time. Such students may try twice in the five years after their first exam. However, they are no longer allowed to attend classes, and they prepare for the final exam individually. Accordingly, they did not have the opportunity to get to know the online methods used as deeply as the students of the 2019/20 academic year. Although they were invited to the "dress rehearsal", we feared that this could not replace the practice that other students had had the opportunity to get.

Finally, our subjective impression was that this was not the main difference between students. We had a resitting examinee who easily briefed her peers on the

mysteries of the virtual world at the rehearsal, but there were examples of the opposite: we had a student who worked with us online for months, and at the final exam, she didn't even know which button to press. In this case, individual differences and affinities seem to have been decisive. The good news is that most students have adapted very quickly to virtual conditions, but it is bad news that the performance of students averse to computers was negatively affected by this situation.

The second factor worth considering is the mental burden on trainers. We all expected that the online exam situation would be a difficult extra burden for us too, but we were pleasantly surprised that this was not the case. The reason for this might have been that the faces appearing in Zoom windows are difficult to chat with, or start a conversation with, about topics different from the subject of the exam – especially when the examinee's face is in one of the windows. So everything that has not much to do with the subject disappeared from the exam situation, and we focused on the task very objectively, almost in a vacuum. As a result, we worked faster and had to share our attention with less stimuli than in the usual six-to-ten member examination board.

On the other hand, in the case of simultaneous interpretation, it was a huge advantage that we listened separately to the original speech and interpreting, and we were able to compare it with our notes on the original speech. As a result, the exam was much less tiring for the trainers than in the traditional layout, where we get acquainted with the original speech, listen to interpretation and take notes on our thoughts at the same time. We could have listened to some details several times, though it did not happen.

The question arises as to whether these are more objective, fairer ways of examination. After all, interpreting is a genre in which the spoken word disappears. Real customers are not generally able to compare the original speech to that extent in interpreting. With this method, we can control the student's performance to a degree that can never be done in class.

At the same time, while taking notes on the speech, we received a rather realistic picture of the difficulty of the original speech (the pace, logical structure and information density) due to the peculiarities of consecutive note-taking. Let's not forget that the examination itself is not a natural situation either: members of the examination board must concentrate on the students' performance for long hours and days on end. Would it not be reasonable and fair to make things easier in the future with similar methods? When using asynchronous methods, this question arises over and over again: they provide greater transparency, but is it fair and useful to use them?

A further reduction in the burden on the trainers was that six or eight examinees could use a single synchronous speech at the same time. Thus, fewer speeches had to be made, and it was easier to compare students' performance with a common objective standard. Instead of speeches with different complexity, the students all worked on the same speech. However, from the point of view of the assessment, the question arises again: are we as critical with the student we first

listen to, when we are just getting to know the speech, as with the one who is telling us the same familiar story we already know by heart for the sixth time?

Overall, we can say that the EMCI final exams were preceded by a lot of preparation and excitement, but they were conducted smoothly with the stars aligned in our favour. Although some of the methods used were born out of necessity, we realised that they had positive effects. As a result, the examination was completed with common reflection on how we could also benefit from these new methods in the context of attendance examinations.

5.4. European Masters in Conference Interpreting (EMCI) - outlook

As with the EMT network, the question of how the final examination was approached by other members of the EMCI network may arise. Among the Hungarian interpreting institutions, the Department of Translation and Interpreting of ELTE is the only member of this consortium, which was founded by the interpreting services of the European Union and is currently chaired by our department. Contrary to the translation training courses, there are no official reports or exam rules available on the internet, but due to close cooperation and communication between trainers, some trends can be outlined. It is common for all institutions that, when organising the final exams, the most stable technical solution was chosen in the interests of the students who were going to take the exams.

Some of the member universities tested with asynchronous means, i.e. prerecorded speeches. The main merit of this method is that students are not so vulnerable to bandwidth fluctuations, as Internet connection is only required when recordings are uploaded and downloaded.

Another group of member universities somehow managed to obtain permission for an on-the-spot exam. In the legal environment in Hungary, we did not have the opportunity to do this. Some member universities solved this problem by deferring the exam until the end of summer, when lockdowns were eased in most EU countries. We had considered this possibility, but we decided not to postpone the exams. On the one hand, the performance of our students who were prepared for the exam date would probably have been significantly undermined by a few months' delay. On the other hand, when the exams were organised, we could not predict what awaited us in August.

At the same time, the fact that several training institutions carried out serious lobbying activities or reorganised their programme in order to allow students to take examinations on-the-spot shows the importance that interpreters attach to real-time relationships and to direct and unhindered communication. These are not yet fully realised in an online environment in the current situation.

6. Closing thoughts

Our report described the final exams at the Department of Translation and Interpreting at ELTE in the spring term of 2020. We found with relief that even in the time of the pandemic, we managed to organise the final examinations at a good standard, both in terms of content and technology, with reliable methods. The changes were borne out of necessity, but in all cases we sought to examine the knowledge of our students in a fair and just manner, in compliance with the university's provisions.

The organisation of exams and, as this volume witnesses, the implementation of distance education, provided a number of valuable lessons for students and teachers alike. New digital tools and methods have been introduced, in a creative manner, taking into account the content of the exams. We have enriched our toolkit with new methods, some of which will remain with us in the future, hopefully largely in presence mode that returns soon, in the form of preparation (for example, uploading tasks in advance, into the cloud), or an additional method (e.g. asynchronous interpretation exercise as an exam preparation method). We are facing the challenges of the future with greater self-confidence and a broader methodological repertoire.

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Doctoral dissertation pre-defense in an online setting: lessons and challenges

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Abstract: PhD students of Translation Studies at ELTE University carry out a pre-defense before being awarded their doctorate degree at the final defense. The dissertation shall at this point conform to the rules regarding the format and content requirements of the final defense. Based on the opinions of the three pre-opponents and other members of the committee, the PhD candidate at this point can still modify the dissertation in consultation with the supervisor. As certain measures had to be implemented due to the pandemic crisis, pre-defense was remarkably different from the normal procedure in having no oral examination after sharing the committee's written comments in advance. Therefore, all members of the committee, the supervisor and the PhD candidate had to face new challenges. As a result, organizing the pre-defense in a written form required flexibility, empathy, and openness to online communication, while the stress associated with public performance has decreased significantly, in addition to the rather smooth organization of the event. The present study details the process, characteristics and lessons learned from the pre-defense organized in a distance-learning setting.

Keywords: pre-defense, pandemic crisis, comments, flexibility, decreased level of stress

1. Introduction

The changeover from a higher education to a distance learning system affected not only the bachelor's and master's education level, but also had an impact on the functioning of doctoral schools. The organization of lectures, seminars, consultations and participation in scientific life (conference participation, writing publica-

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tions) did not pose a particular challenge for students of doctoral schools, either. Only outstanding events linked to the PhD graduation process, the organization of pre-defense and defense represented a completely new experience compared to the usual ones. While the online management of the defense posed technical challenges for organizers, the structure of the pre-defense was quite different from the usual methods. In our study, firstly, we present the process of the pre-defense, then we discuss the differences and difficulties arising from distance learning, as well as the lessons learned during the pre-defense process.

2. Specific features of the workshop

As we all know, the defense of a doctoral dissertation is required to obtain a PhD degree. However, this step is preceded by a no less important event: the pre-defense process of the dissertation. According to the doctoral regulations, PhD candidates who started their studies after 2016 are to submit the final form of the thesis within three years from the day of the complex exam (students can only enter the second part of the doctoral study programme upon the successful completion of the complex exam). Before that, it is necessary to organize a pre-defense, also called home defense, which may take place either before or after the end of the 8th semester. The dissertation submitted for the pre-defense must comply with the formal and substantive requirements for the dissertation to be submitted for the final defense: the PhD candidate submits a paper that is considered to be completely ready for the defense, even if the possibility exists that the student will have to make major changes to the dissertation based on the insights and suggestions of the pre-opponents and the reviewers.

A significant difference between these two defenses is that, unlike the final defense, the pre-defense committee has not two, but three pre-opponents judging the submitted dissertation. In addition to the pre-opponents, all lecturers of the doctoral programme, the chairperson of the committee, its members and secretary may all evaluate the thesis. One of the pre-opponents is an "internal" lecturer (one of ELTE's professors in the case of the Doctoral Program of Translation Studies), while the other pre-opponent is a researcher who is not contracted to this university. In contrast to the public defense, a PhD student of the program submits a third evaluation of the dissertation.

The opponents of the thesis are invited by the head of the doctoral programme, who proposes a method of compiling the evaluation. When assessing the content, it is appropriate to mention the purpose of the research, the theoretical background, as well as the research questions and hypotheses. The reviewers reflect on the corpus of the research and then discuss whether the research methods are appropriate and correct. When evaluating the dissertation, special attention will be given to new results, new terms and their definitions. Another specific aspect is the usefulness of results, their applicability in the practice of translation and in the educa-

tion. When assessing formal aspects, the pre-opponents carefully examine, among other elements, the regularity of the bibliography, the appropriate numbering and address of tables and diagrams, the presentation of examples in different languages, the presentation of sources, finally orthography and typography.

The traditional pre-defense is attended by pre-opponents, but also all interested teachers and PhD students. In this case, the opponents themselves hear each other's opinions, to which the candidate responds one by one. The primary task of pre-opponents is to use their comments and suggestions to help raise the standard of the thesis and to draw the candidate's attention to content and conceptual inconsistencies. Following the professional proposals of the reviewers and the answers of the candidate, the result of the debate is the vision of the final structure of the dissertation, which sometimes differs considerably from the work submitted for pre-defense, and which is the task of the PhD candidate in the time frame at their disposal.

3. Pre-defense in distance learning

In the Doctoral Programme of Translation Studies, pre-defenses usually take place with the personal participation of the PhD candidate, the supervisor and the committee, but due to the emergency situation that arose in spring 2020, it was not possible in this semester. The head of the PhD programme and the Doctoral Office provided the opportunity to organize the pre-defense with distance learning, so unlike the usual case, the process was carried out only in a written form. The dissertation was submitted online. The reviewers had two months to write the review, to which the candidate responded within two weeks, in consultation with the head of the programme and the supervisor. The pre-defense process ended when the head of the programme sent the minutes of the defense to the Doctoral Office. The minutes contain the summary opinion of the head of the programme, the review of the three pre-opponents, the statement by the secretary of the committee and the candidate's reply.

As well as the three pre-opponents, the secretary of the committee also commented on the dissertation. In addition to the substantive observations (the order of presentation of the theoretical background, the reflection on research questions at the end of the thesis, more explicit explanation of the results), all four reviewers also made valuable comments on the formal errors of the dissertation. Formal errors involving language or stylistic incorrect wordings, formatting deficiencies were sent to the candidate. In the context of the doctoral dissertation, all four critics commented on whether they would recommend that the dissertation be put to a final defense.

From the perspective of the PhD candidate, it is essential to have a pre-defense process because it is still possible to discuss and modify all substantive and formal elements. The proposals made during the pre-defense can be incorporated into the

final form of the dissertation. During the written conduct of the pre-defense, a significant part of the process does not deviate from the usual schedule, as all pre-opponents have assessed the dissertations in detail and in writing. It is also not new that the candidate has to answer written opinions in a written form. However, a significant difference was that after the forwarding of written opinions, there was no oral discussion or scientific discussion. The latter factor has caused difficulties for all participants in the process, since the lack of oral debate has become particularly important for all comments to be formulated with extremely precise, comprehensible and constructive criticism. The pre-opponents also offered a telephone consultation option, which the candidate should use if a point of criticism is difficult to understand, or it is needed in any case to draw the judges' attention to an aspect or circumstance that may modify the comments made in the evaluation.

4. Adaptation to changed circumstances

Due to the lack of oral discussion, the members of the committee, the head of programme, the supervisor and the PhD candidate all needed more time and energy for the successful completion of the pre-defense. It required flexibility and patience from all participants to consult on the phone and in online form. It is also important to mention the self-evident stress associated with the pre-defense, which may be reduced by the absence of public participation. At the same time, as a result of distance learning, the responsibility and engagement of the doctoral candidate is increased. The successful completion of the pre-defense requires greater attention from the PhD candidate, who helps facilitate interactions with the Doctoral Office, the head of programme, the supervisor and the pre-opponents, and who thus coordinates the successive implementation of each of the elements of the event. This task falls primarily to the doctoral candidate because they are the most interested person to have a successful pre-defense as soon as possible, and they see best where the process is, which party should be contacted next in order to make progress.

The increase in the responsibility of the PhD candidate requires a kind of autonomy, which characterises both the preparation and realization of the pre-defense. It is evident that the doctoral candidate will not be left alone with the increased responsibility incumbent on them, they can initiate consultations with the supervisor, the Doctoral Office or the head of programme at any time, if they feel that their own expertise alone is not sufficient to further the process. This increased autonomy undoubtedly has a positive impact on the awareness of processes and consequences of the doctoral candidate.

5. The role of the supervisor

If we approach the pre-defense from the relationship between the supervisor and the PhD candidate, we can conclude that increased awareness will also play an important role in these relations, and empathy will also be brought to the fore. Receiving written reviews by email, the lack of oral reflections are difficult psychological situations for the doctoral candidate. Since pre-opponents are responsible for formulating opinions that can further increase the professional value of the dissertation, the candidate can easily become unsure about the value of their own work while reading them. It is therefore important during the consultations to make the author aware that critical remarks do not necessarily refer to a poor quality thesis, especially if the opinions of the pre-opponents also detail the undisputed merits of the work at length.

In the absence of an oral defense, the doctoral candidate must decide, on the basis of written versions of the opinions, which proposals will be included in the final paper. Dweck's research on the causes of success and failure quotes the idea of Benjamin Barber, who said: "I don't divide the world into the weak and the strong, or the successes and the failures, those who make it or those who don't. I divide the world into learners and non-learners."[2] In the case of these pre-defenses, learning should not be narrowed down to concrete preparation, but rather to take a constructive account of the insights and suggestions of pre-opponents. The task of the consultations is therefore to organise critical observations, to identify contradictory observations, and to find all the elements that may be relevant to the candidate's scientific career. At the same time, the supervisor may also perceive the hindrance of the candidate, who may have problems with the cooperative processing of pre-opponent opinions, as, in the absence of a real debate, the possibility of presenting the benefits of their own concept is very limited. In such cases, the supervisor may try to make the student aware of the positive effects that can be palpable by integrating certain elements of pre-opponent opinions. A change of perspective may also be necessary to remove the doctoral candidate from being stuck. For example, the retrospection of the imaginary completion of the programme enables the doctoral candidate to become aware of all the positives they can face after restructuring the paper. These include, for example, the possibility to apply for a final defense, the possibility of professional cooperation following the consultations with the pre-opponents, and the increase in the relevance of the dissertation as a result of integrating new aspects.

In the case of consultations, more precise planning of the timetable in the online space will be strengthened so that the fulfilment of the tasks can be checked both during the self-review process of the doctoral candidate and for the supervisor. Planning should also take into account progress and timeframes for administrative

[2] Source: https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/164408-i-don-t-divide-the-world-into-the-weak-and-the

tasks. In mapping tasks, the candidate should be assisted in the assessment of their own capacity, in which they must calculate by fulfilling other responsibilities (study and work tasks).The doctoral candidate will therefore have the basic task to prepare the timetable, to which the supervisor can contribute only by taking stock of the succession of tasks and by helping to meet the necessary deadlines. The advantage of determining the possible scheduling is that the doctoral candidate may feel fully empowered, since the appointment of each phase is not conducted by the supervisor on the basis of the obligations, but rather by the doctoral candidate in the light of the deadlines and their own possibilities.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the pre-defense debate can also be conducted within the framework of the distance learning system, the organisation takes less time and stress sources decrease. At the same time, it requires more flexibility and patience from all members of the committee and from the PhD candidate who spends a significant part of the semester in the online space. The real conduct of pre-defense without oral debate requires increased awareness of the candidate and more empathy by the supervisor. However, in the case of future pre-defenses, consideration should be given to allowing the candidate the opportunity to express their opinion in an online debate and to reflect on the pre-opponent's opinions. A useful result of that may arise during the scientific discourse on the subject of the dissertation, which the candidate may be able to put into the dissertation in the remaining time frame. On the other hand, the online pre-defense would also be a good opportunity to prepare the candidate for the final defense process itself.

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My distance learning

Student observations and experiences

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On the 4th of March 2020, the first Covid-19 case was officially confirmed in Hungary, which caused nationwide measures to come into effect in order to keep the virus at bay. Due to the outbreak of the pandemic and the rising number of infections, the Hungarian government declared a state of emergency on the 11th of March 2020, which led to the Ministry for Innovation and Technology providing for the operation of higher education institutions. The Rector of Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) ordered a full educational break between the 12th and 13th of March, which was followed by a spring break between the 16th and 22nd of March – a week earlier than the date set forth in the Academic Calendar. From this point on, students were not allowed to visit the campus until the withdrawal of the provision. Thus, after the break, from the 23rd of March 2020, all departments of ELTE switched to distance learning, which the administrative and educational staff of the university could prepare for during the educational and spring break. The overall aim was for the spring semester to be successfully completed, regardless of the epidemiological situation.

Switching to distance learning required an unprecedented level of courage, flexibility and swift adjustment from everyone at the university, including administrative assistants, lecturers and students. The Department of Translation and Interpreting at ELTE had a head start in the process – although there were still numerous challenges to face – thanks to its several years of experience in offering specialised training courses online. Consequently, distance learning was not a new phenomenon for the majority of trainers, and the switch progressed relatively smoothly concerning interpreting and translation seminars in our MA programme, too. Thus, as ELTE navigated through difficult waters, a number of university and inter-university studies have been published based on the observations of distance learning settings, with particular regard to student experiences. Although the compilation of studies in the present volume also deals with the aforementioned aspects, no numbers, percentages, or in-depth analyses will speak louder than the accounts given by students in their own words. In the following, I would like to share a few of these accounts, organised in accordance with their main topic.

After the initial shock

The very first reaction was undoubtedly shock, with a hint of despair – feeling almost like in a television period drama, as no one was sure how to implement the safe and conventional "classroom education" methods in the new distance learning setting. After the first online seminars, however, tempers finally started to cool.

> *„In my opinion, distance learning was well-organised, the lecturers got in touch with us right away to inform us about the updated course schedules and set up the online courses on Canvas rather quickly."*

> *„Ultimately, distance learning was by far not as much of a disaster as I had initially experienced it. At first, it was not easy to get used to the fact that the usual daily hassle was gone. Apart from that, news sites were full of reports about corona cases – so much so that this topic was even considered a taboo when it came to the usual »breaking news round« at the beginning of each interpreting seminar. Just like in the case of Voldemort. One thing is for sure: just hearing the »c-word« makes me sick."*

After a while, a number of students came to realise that distance learning has its perks, primarily by having a flexible working and studying schedule. However, at the same time, it became clear that convenience and flexibility did not mean that being overly laid-back was acceptable, or that the quality of education would necessarily deteriorate.

> *„To be honest, this whole situation came in handy for me as I managed to complete the semester with good grades, even though I also had a job at the time. After the first week of the semester when we were still attending classes on the campus, I was even worried about how I would do my studies and work parallel. That's why the flexibility of distance learning made everything easier with broader deadlines such as 23:59 on Canvas, and the new scheme also made it possible to join Zoom seminars during a lunch break, for instance."*

> *"I think this is a much more comfortable way of learning. The new morning routine saved me time and much more sleep. There was neither rush nor necessity to travel to university. Moreover, I would say that studying from home did not have any negative impact on my achievement. Each online course was as effective as when we met in the flesh. Even the online interpreting courses via Zoom were successfully conducted."*

"My Family and Other Animals"

The pandemic lockdowns leading to home learning and home office put families in an unusual situation. They were forced to fulfil their obligations and tasks from home, all using common resources in the same place at the same time. We certainly come from various backgrounds, dealing with various tasks, and doing different activities, so adjusting to the new circumstances proved to be a huge challenge at times. Furthermore, the necessary lockdown created a strange situation for many of us, the very concept of "home" became a mixed metaphor, since home is normally considered the place of rest, retirement, relaxation and family time, as far away from the working atmosphere as possible. Therefore, switching to a joint office, school and family home setting was not easy. Families could no longer separate work from personal life. Nevertheless, funny lockdown moments made the days of home learning and working easier to bear:

"I have many hilarious experiences from home learning. My sibling and I moved back to our parents for some time, and both of us struggled with the new routines a lot. Our parents do not really check our timetable. They keep handling their own business – even on camera :D. Once, my father entered my room and when he realised I was having a class he grinned at the camera. Then he walked towards the window and managed the curtains unconcernedly. During the same class, my mother happened to bring me lunch, interrupting the lesson. As I excused myself, the teacher responded 'Go on, interpret to earn your lunch…' ☺"

*"Because the whole family – the sibling and parents combo – lived under the same roof, we got on each others' nerves sometimes. My father busied himself cooking. Once, he came to my room just when I had a class, offering some dumplings *glaring, microphone muted: Later, Dad, later. By the way, leave some plum ones for me!!"*

"The Internet connection was like a fairy tale – working once upon a time… during a class, I had to change venues several times, and when there was no connection at all, I moved into the living room. Of course, my family started to swarm around me just then, waltzing happily in front of the camera. Behind the monitor, my brother even started to show an impromptu dance just when I was interpreting. It was hard to keep a straight face. ☺"

"We've got a puppy which was always barking during the interpreting classes for fun, thinking he could do it better than me. Sometimes he jumped into my lap, checking the screen out of curiosity. My mother regularly shouted up to ask what I wanted to have for lunch, where I had put this and that because she couldn't find it anywhere, or she ordered me to bring down the laundry. My

favourite story ever was when she switched on that wonderful vacuum cleaner just when I had an interpreting class. Yeah, it was absolutely necessary for her to do so. Funnily enough, never had she hoovered the floor before."

"I was having an online class when my father shouted from the outside: 'made some breakfast, shall I bring it in?' I muted the microphone very quickly, switched off the camera and answered that I didn't need it, I was having a lesson. This was a good idea because he wasn't listening, and opened the door once more asking if I was hungry, with the breakfast tray in his hands. Of course, it was just my turn to interpret, so I couldn't eat my breakfast. But at the sight of the mouth-watering food, I became awfully hungry, thinking about the meal all through the class. Following that the same happened during the online work meetings, I put up a note written in capital letters about my weekly schedule, including online classes and meetings related to work. This helped me an awful lot, because afterwards they knew exactly when I was busy. Moreover, following this incident, I learned a very important lesson: always have breakfast before the lesson."

As much as one can trust experts and sociologists, working from within family settings is only a thing of the future. According to certain social forecasts, we can expect that with the growing popularity of home office – working from home – it will soon become the norm that family members might pop up, and certain family happenings might also appear in the background of work-related meetings, in our case, interpreting events. This scenario is not completely alien to the profession, as a significant part of professionals work from home or as a freelancer. This means that distance learning provides our translation students the opportunity to gain useful real-life experience. At the same time, as distance interpreting and videoconference interpreting are increasingly in demand, it seems likely that in the future, our interpreter trainees will make use of the experience they have recently gained. However, the last account above sheds light on the major lesson we can draw from the situation: with clear communication and unambiguous coordination – as well as eating our meals at the right time – embarrassing moments can be avoided, and harmonious family life can be maintained with the aid of our helpful family members' understanding and cooperation.

In tune with technology

At the workplace and the university, one can rely on the institution's infrastructure, and it is not necessarily required to take charge of the digital equipment needed for the work, and the appropriately fast broadband internet connection essential for working online. Leaving the university's computing infrastructure behind, students and teachers were literally left to their own devices to cope with the newly

developed and unknown digital learning platforms – and often with their own family members as well, who also wanted to use the internet and the digital gadgets. As shown by the following accounts, besides patience and flexibility, humour is key to tackle such difficulties.

"It might come as a surprise, but my laptop was noticeably not fond of the idea of running Zoom, a browser, six different Word documents, and a PDF reader on it simultaneously. On top of that, I expected it to load websites quickly, as I had to search in dictionaries. Due to the technical issues, one of my mid-term tests was almost gone, since I could barely switch on the miserable laptop."

"When I have a class between 12 and 14 p.m., my internet connection becomes, let's say, unstable, because for some mysterious reason there is no Wi-Fi in our home when the microwave is on… and our parents do not wait with the lunch till the end of the class, but calmly use the microwave, so we keep getting disconnected from Zoom ☺"

"I initially found it really funny how Zoom was making a fool out of us, and tried to discourage us from the work but did not succeed, as we started the interpreting class over, even four times when needed :D. Then towards the end, when I got disconnected from Zoom just in the middle of interpreting, I did not feel it was that funny anymore…"

"Interpreting classes caused the greatest difficulty for me, since I lost Internet connection regularly, and did not always get the words right due to acoustic problems; or I missed out parts, which lead to several awkward misunderstandings, but in the end I just laughed about it, as I did not have many other options."

"It was one of the last weeks when I had issues with my Internet connection right in the middle of a Monday evening German–Hungarian interpreting class. I got disconnected from Zoom multiple times, then one of my groupmates wrote to me later that during one of these occasions it would have been my turn to interpret the speech. I could still hear the speech which I would have had to interpret, and I can honestly tell you that I secretly rejoiced at the disconnection, since as a matter of fact, I would have performed disastrously. So even though I was angry due to the technical problem, I was saved from an embarrassing situation."

"In one of our interpreting courses our weekly tasks included interpreting the speeches sent to us, and sending them back as recordings. Over the weeks I got completely used to being a couch potato, I almost never met people in real-life, and everything took place on the computer or on the phone. As a result, on a long, exhausting day I closed one of my speeches the following way: »Thank

you for your attention, viszonthallásra*«" – a word used only in phone calls meaning: hear you later!"*

"During the first classes I joined by turning on the camera, but later, as time passed, I decided not to show my lockdown hairstyle, being better not to scare the others with it anymore, so I turned it off."

"At first interpreting was weird, I also encountered problems with the sound quality, however, by the end I got completely used to it – I think the breakthrough happened when I turned off the camera ☺."

Self-management at its best

One of the major lessons of distance learning at the Department of Translation and Interpreting is that self-discipline and the consistent work of the students are essential conditions for continuous and effective development. As has already been mentioned above, a significant number of translators in this profession work from home with their own digital devices – with all the little gremlins of technology, following their own daily schedule, keeping in mind the agreed deadlines, while balancing family and private life. Due to the transition to distance learning, the department's translator and interpreter students were thrown in the deep end and into a situation which awaits them in their future careers. However, self-management is far from easy, as we are deprived of the university's institutional framework and infrastructure, when days become something of a blur, despite trainers trying their best to set clear requirements and achievable deadlines. At first, the burden seemed to be too heavy, but later we could see the light at the end of the tunnel…

"Distance learning evoked conflicting emotions in me. We have teachers who expect the same amount from us as they did and are continuously keeping contact with us. By contrast, there are those who think that everybody goes nowhere, so we can fill our free time with university stuff. We were given so many tasks from week to week that we spent one or two days doing them. Although I hoped for more free time in addition to distance learning, it didn't happen, especially since I am constantly at home."

"One thing that affected me in a negative way was that sometimes I had the feeling I had to do three times more work. Now and then I felt that things were out of control because it was hard to follow which seminar, with whom, where and when we held the given class."

"At some points I also had the impression that too many tasks flooded in on us, but it is resulting from homework and class work not being separated, as

before. Though we could save a significant amount of commuting time, it was often a necessity for us, as what we could once cram into one question, we now have to formulate in several emails, forum comments."

"I was happy with the webinar classes because they meant fixed points in my slowly disintegrating days. At first, it was difficult for me, too, not to be buried under all the incoming translations and forums. I felt like I had more tasks to do than when I went to the university. In hindsight, I should have made a sharp division between my free time and learning. I must work on my self-management skills, but it was a good experience for me. If later it comes to time-management as a freelance translator, I'll be able to plan ahead and separate my free time. I must improve self-discipline as well: if I don't feel like translating in a given moment, I shouldn't just stand up after 10 minutes and go for a run to continue working in the evening... which will either happen or maybe not, if I come across a good film…"

"My favourite thing in this experience was that I could do my own schedule. This way I was able to do my tasks in one or two days and I could rest as well or spend my time with something else on the following day."

"Self-discipline and right timing are significant. After a certain period of time, you should turn off your computer and not even look at your e-mails, because you can easily become addicted to work. Doing some sports are essential, particularly running has helped me to get out and clear my head."

"It was fun to learn from the comfort of home, because if I got hungry, I just had to go out to the kitchen: D and according to others: sometimes I had to simply turn off the computer because learning seemed endless, which could be really frustrating."

"I tried to do my schedule so that my days, which otherwise contained almost no fixed appointments, would not fall apart completely. In the beginning, I felt like I was saving a lot of time by not having to use public transportation. However, I didn't have this feeling for long, because we really had the impression that we needed to do more tasks for classes at the university, although maybe that wasn't the case. We just had to suddenly adapt to which class, how, on what platform to do what. For the first few weeks, I kept writing my lists so I wouldn't forget anything."

"I have several friends who are not attending university and can't even work from home. All along, they were telling me how much I should appreciate it that I have school. And indeed, it's great to get up knowing you have tasks and

good to fall asleep knowing that you have improved in something and learnt something."

Distance learning in university education caused by the pandemic has brought ups and downs into students' lives, from the first joy over the break to the start of distance learning until the moment when university attendance began to be missed…

"*For me the last few months have been an extremely mixed experience. In the beginning, I thought everything was going to go smoothly and it felt like a long weekend or a school break. Then the time I spent at home started to get a little too long. I had to set a new goal, and I had to do my schedule completely differently, because I no longer lived in the dormitory with a roommate where I only had to cook, wash and clean for myself or for the two of us, but lived with my family, which meant exactly twice as much work. It took me a few weeks to figure out the kind of schedule that included housework, studying, and even a little relaxation.*

For a short period of time it was quite nice. There was plenty to do and it felt good that I could move forward with my schedule. Even if I was able to go out, I would not (because I live in Veszprém geographically, but it rather feels like I live in the neighbouring galaxy on asteroid 612 if anyone cares), so I spent my free time inside the house with activities I personally enjoy. I was finally able to start reading books bought, once-smelled-then-later-set aside, I drew, painted, bought workbooks with the subtitle 'Meditative Coloring Book for Adults', I tried about six new cookie recipes…

Of course, this situation lasted only for a while. The more assignments I had to do, the more I missed personal consultation (not just for the dissertation). As good and useful as it was, no forum could ever replace personal discourse. It felt even worse that university and home were at one place, there was nowhere to avoid one another. I used to barely do anything, yet I was really tired. I made some mistakes that I would not even make in my dreams under normal circumstances…"

Man is a social animal

During e-learning it is highly important that teachers and students stay in touch with each other and communicate, even more so since there is no opportunity for personal meetings and there is a lack of connection between people. The following statements show that the students too noticed that there was a lack of opportunity to learn together and give mutual feedback, which were implemented in attendance-based learning, even though e-learning offers a number of methods − such as using Zoom, virtual classrooms and online forums − that help students to work together. Still, students missed each others' company the most.

"I really missed the well-integrated community. For me it's very important to see people's faces and to hear everyone's opinion, which helps us to expand our vocabulary, not to mention that this way I'm introduced to other viewpoints and I get feedback, instead of just reading the comments or staring at the small square on my screen."

"One would never think how much they might miss social interactions, a smile, a telling look or even the 'mutual suffering' caused by the difficulties of student life. It's great to see everyone during our videoconferences, but it's even better to spend the night talking with our peers."

"I miss each other's company too. That's why I like classes that are held on Zoom, because I was able to see and hear everyone at the same time, however, online meetings are not even close to meeting in person."

Summa summarum

Eötvös Loránd University, just like all the other educational institutions in the country, did not switch back to presential education, thus the 2019/2020 spring semester ended in e-learning, including undergraduate and master-level and even doctorate courses. It is important to note that it was the joint effort of the university staff and students that made it possible for all the pedagogical and academic objectives to be met, that the classes were held, the exams took place, the theses were written and the final state examinations were also held. At-the end of the official state of emergency, we should consider all the gained experiences and draw the necessary conclusions.

"Based on what I've heard from my acquaintances who study at different universities and courses, I can confidently say that in our department e-learning worked perfectly fine, considering the conditions we were in."

"In my opinion, translation and interpreting courses were completely achievable through the Internet, without them being at the expense of quality, since luckily we don't need much, just a piece of paper, a pen or a computer and our voices, so we didn't need any special equipment for the first year of the course."

"I think so too that compared to our opportunities and circumstances the whole department and us students too tried to get used to the situation and that we did it successfully. I end this period with mixed feelings (I hope it's ending and we don't have to continue living our lives this way for too long)."

"We've learnt a lot about technology, ourselves, self-discipline, time management... I feel our teachers were always understanding and helpful and even thankful for us doing our tasks properly, which was a joint effort. :)"

We, the Department of Translation and Interpreting of Eötvös Loránd University are thankful to the students who took part in the e-learning classes of the 2019/2020 spring semester and gave an account of their experiences about learning at home as a result of the restrictions enforced due to the virus: Ágota Vadász, Adrienn Kaiser, Orsolya Gál, Boglárka Tóth, Karola Szekrényes, Franciska Van Waarden, Villő Végvári, Melinda Nagy, Dániel Pál, Petra Bakos, Zoé Mayer, Bernadett Busi-Szabó, Enikő Czikó, Kitti Simon, Dorina Mátrai and Krisztina Tóth. I believe that, as trainers, we should all be grateful for the patient and contributory approach of our students that was maintained throughout the e-learning period. From the above accounts, we can learn a lot about learning management, self-discipline, work ethics, communication − and about each other. We have to treasure these important lessons, so that we can also benefit from them in the event of future emergencies, or even in normal everyday life because much has changed and neither university education nor ourselves will ever be the same again.

"I think we managed to get the most out of this situation.
So, high-five to everyone!!! :"*

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As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, which swept across the globe in the spring of 2020, both students and faculty members found themselves in an unprecedented situation. Due to restrictive measures, it was not possible to hold classes in university campus buildings, however, thanks to the spectacular technological advancement of recent decades, it became possible to replace face to face lessons with distance teaching using modern information and communication technologies. This was also the case at the Department of Translation and Interpreting at Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE), Hungary. Teachers and students of the department had already had experience with distance learning courses, virtual lessons, or training sessions through video conferencing equipment, hence they were not completely unfamiliar with the task at hand. Nevertheless, it has proved a challenge to introduce distance learning based largely on digital tools in all of our training formats, be it translator, interpreter, multimedia translation training or even the doctoral program. In this volume of studies, lecturers of the Department of Translation and Interpreting at ELTE review the lessons learned from their students' feedback and their own experiences regarding the teaching methods used during the first wave of the coronavirus pandemic: difficulties they had to overcome and new opportunities they encountered when teaching and assessing with the help of LMS systems, video call programs and remote interpreting platforms.