**Translator and Interpreter Profile**

**Hedvig Molnár**

***Interpreter and translator***

***Languages: Hungarian, English, German***

„I’ve always been obsessed with learning languages, and it’s amazing to be able to use them in my daily work. I was born in 1976 grew up in a small town where everyone spoke only Hungarian. I didn't have a language background: Neither of my parents nor any of my other close relatives spoke a foreign language.  I was about 10 when I decided to learn German and became good at it. A classmate of mine took me to an after-school language club, where he had been learning German there for several months and I asked him if I could go with him. We went there together after school hours.”

The main character of my profile is Hedvig Molnár, translator and interpreter, who I asked about this profession, her personal experiences, and her future plans. During this conversation, I gained a lot of positive experiences and I am pleased to have got help from a very sympathetic and experienced person, like her.

Hedvig had been interested in languages since elementary school, at that time Russian was the only foreign language taught in schools, however there was possibility for them to learn foreign languages in private lessons and to go on exchange holidays. She spent her summer holidays in the German Democratic Republic, and after finished secondary school she had the chance to stay in Germany for about two years, which was very useful to gain the understanding of the language, the culture and come to better understand dialects. She started her career as an interpreter-secretary, she was quite fortunate, because she got the opportunity to interpret at meetings and negotiations and accompany the managing director on her business trips almost immediately after starting her job. Actually she started to learn languages consciously and to develop skills from that time. Hedvig passed her ÖSD (Oberstufe Deutsch) language exam in Austria, and having got a professional qualification in International Trade and Custom Clearance, she worked as a part-time translator/interpreter as a second job. After having graduated from college – SZOLF, BA in International Economics, specialized in Analysis of International Companies and Controlling – she was studying and working in London for a year. Thanks to her computer skills (MS Access), she got into a charitable organization (APEX Trust), where she recorded short memos, which the telephonist colleagues had written based on their phone conversations, into a database. Beside she was also attending a language school. In fact, here she learned to speak in English perfectly, and she was able to pass the LCCI Level 3 Certificate in English for Business language exam, and after coming home she worked as an interpreter-translator personal assistant in the field of accounting and finance in respect of her degree. Later she worked in technical field, where she translated handbooks, manuals, user’s guides, PR materials and brochures, furthermore she interpreted at meetings, workshops and in different types of events. Hedvig likes to interpret mostly from German to English, or vice versa.

“If someone asks me whether I prefer interpreting or translating, I would choose the first one. There are many people who think that interpretation and translation are the same, but this is not true, moreover, other skills are required for both. On the one hand, interpreting is a more difficult task, because there are no options for checking, the tasks must be solved in the given time as professionally as possible. There are some cases, when a professional interpreter has to face with a difficult task, for example when the client speaks incoherently or uses metaphors. A quality translation of these types of speeches is really difficult. On the other hand this profession will never become boring, as we always have to face with new situations, language environments and meet so many types of people every day.”

The basis of a professional interpretation/translation is preparation, and it also includes that we are aware of our capacities. Normally, in the case of interpretation, we should have the possibility for consultation with the client, even on the phone, in order to know what will be the topic of the work. Unfortunately this is quite often missed. Many clients don’t even think about the fact that the interpreter should also prepare for a factory visit, for example. In most cases it isn’t the technical part that causes problems, but the lack of “local” knowledge, that in a factory or company everybody knows, except of the interpreter.

As for translation, internet sources, books and parallel texts are available and we can also search for them, which can facilitate our job. Anyway preparation means the collecting of as many information as possible. Naturally routine works also occur.

All profession has its own challenges. Interpreting a speech is quite difficult, if it has incoherent sentences, contradictory text or metaphors, or the speaker repeats the same phrases over and over. In such case it is not an easy task to interpret what is the speech about exactly. More simple problems also exist, for example if you can’t hear the speech in a factory, or if someone speaks too fast, absorbing the words, or speaks with a strong accent (like Far-Eastern or French clients).

In the case of translations – whether it is a catalogue, or brochure or a technical documentation – it is a more and more common expectation to provide a documentum format that matches the original one, the appropriate font and font size, text translations on photos, and text length of different layouts. Before accepting an assignment, we have to be fully aware of the fact that appropriate technologies (Photo and desk top publishing softwares etc.), are available, and we have enough time to perform our task, as deadlines have to be kept.

There are some requests and subjects she declines, because she doesn’t know much about, and she is not interested in either, like healthcare, sports and so on.

In her opinion it’s very important to know our own limits. She declines a translation – even if it is in her specialisation – for which she doesn’t feel to have the sufficient knowledge.

When I asked her about her future plans and intentions, she said thatwebsite translation and translating multilingual websites and applications mean a special challenge to her. In order to base her knowledge and practice on that, she started to attend a programming training course, where she is writing her thesis these days, which takes all her capacities. Moreover, she would like to refresh her Dutch and French, that she started learning earlier, but recently she hasn’t had too much opportunities to practice.

In her opinion nowadays the translator/interpreter can develop more easily and quickly, if he or she is motivated enough, compared to the time she started with translation. They have the possibility to study, to work abroad, there are plenty of background materials on the internet, so today much more developed technical devices help gaining knowledge and preparing for an interpretation/translation job. On the other hand it seems to be more difficult, as accordingly the expectations became higher as well, we have to take into consideration the localization, or the pre- and post-editing and correction of machine translation. The excellent foreign- and mother language proficiency, the knowledge of the other culture, openness, communication and stress coping skills, self-control, cooperation with the clients, adaptability, flexibility, courtesy, patience, strong memory and recall skills are essential competences.

Certainly it is necessary to get into of more fields and their terminologies. For example there are significant needs for economical, judicial and technical translations in the professional translation market. In order to be up-to-date and competitive a continuous self-learning is a must, and not just linguistically. Excellent computer skills can also offer significant advantages. Hedvig doesn’t only mean digital dictionaries, but the terminology databases, CAT devices, online searching, and the use of translation support softwares are basic requirements, from these types of developments we can profit a lot, even manual work can be automatized. You can translate more content to even higher quality if you are able to use CAT desktop application (Trados Studio, MemoQ), that have many features like translation memory, predictive typing, automatic error correction, machine translation etc. Besides the developing of foreign language competences, project management- and business skills are also required. As a professional translator/interpreter, you must be able to assess your own resources, to schedule your time and your capacities, to lay out and perform the job, as well as you exercise with your rights and turn with responsibility to the clients.

“Love language(s) and keep studying it (them), select a special area and be prepared to learn more about! Check any term you are not sure in a dictionary or with a native speaker, or the client requested the translation! Proofread then do it again, bear in mind that technology is part of our professional lives, so keep your IT skills up-to-date and use CAT tools!”

**Written by:**

**Barbara Tóth**

**Pázmány Péter Catholic University**

**Translation and Interpreting MA**

**1 May 2017**