



DRUŠTVO
SUDSKIH
TUMAČA I
PREVODITELJA

ASSOCIATION
OF COURT
INTERPRETERS
AND TRANSLATORS

COURT APPOINTED INTERPRETERS AND TRANSLATORS WITHIN THE BROADER CONTEXT OF LEGAL TRANSLATORS COMMUNITY

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Introduction

Court interpreters – legal framework

- The legal norm governing the legal status of court interpreters is the **Courts Act** (Official Gazette 28/13)

§123

- *„(5) The Minister of Justice shall pass a **bylaw** defining the way of establishing if a person is eligible for appointment as a court interpreter, their rights and duties, the amount of their compensation and allowance of costs .”*
- **Bylaw on court interpreters** (Off. Gaz. **88/08** i 119/08)
 - Basic legal norm defining the rights and obligations of permanent court interpreters

Introduction

„Permanent Court Interpreter“

- „court“ = appointed by the court, not restricting the business of an interpreter to only legal domain
- „interpreter“ = here meaning a translator doing both written and oral translations
- „permanent“ court interpreter – as opposed to "*ad hoc*" sworn interpreter, which can be done for instance by a judge under certain circumstances

Procedure of appointment of a court interpreter

A person is eligible to be appointed as a court interpreter if the prerequisites listed below have been met:

- general conditions for state servants (**no criminal record**)
- besides Croatian, excellent command of the foreign language(s) the candidate applies for (**degree in languages** or **C2 certificate** acc. to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages)
- acquired university graduate degree (Master degree)
- **exam in legal basics** (judicial administration organization, state administration, legal terminology) – Croatian legal system only!
- training for court interpreters candidates, done with an association of court interpreters

Procedure of appointment of a court interpreter

Application to
the County Court

Exams

Final training

university
graduate
degree

degree in languages

degree in economics,
engineering, ...

degree in law

C2

exam in
legal
basics

(County
Court)

training

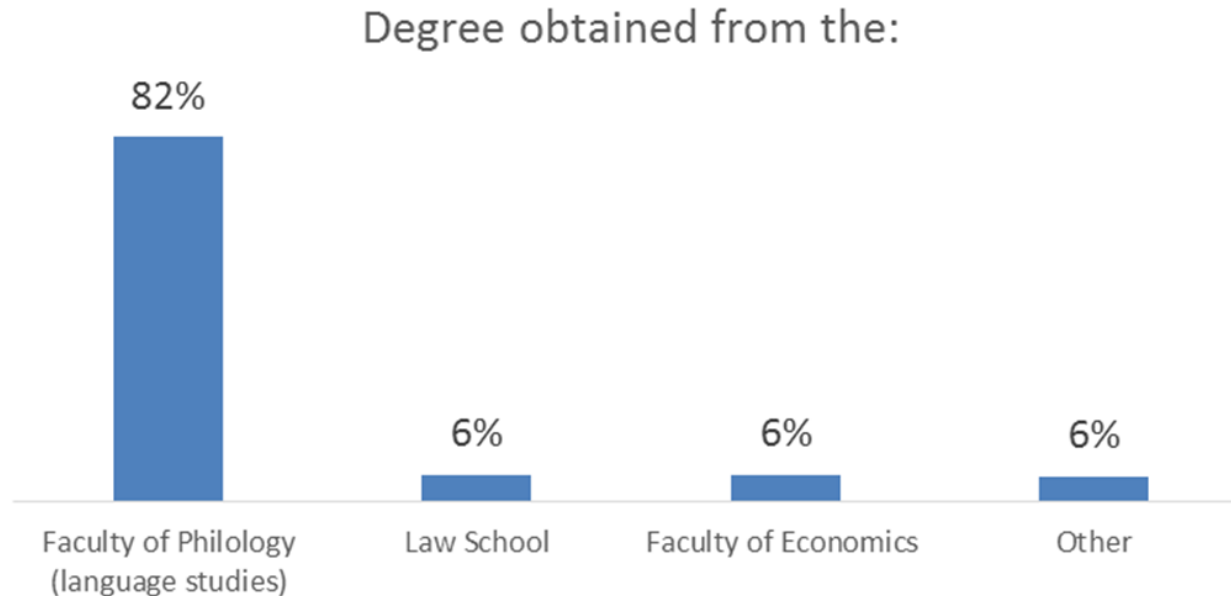
(court
interpreters
association)

Survey among CI/LIT – Sample structure

Survey*:

84% Court Interpreters

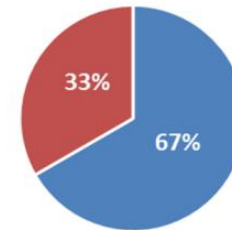
16% non-Court Interpreters



* Questionnaire sent out to approx. 120 addressees; 32 respondents

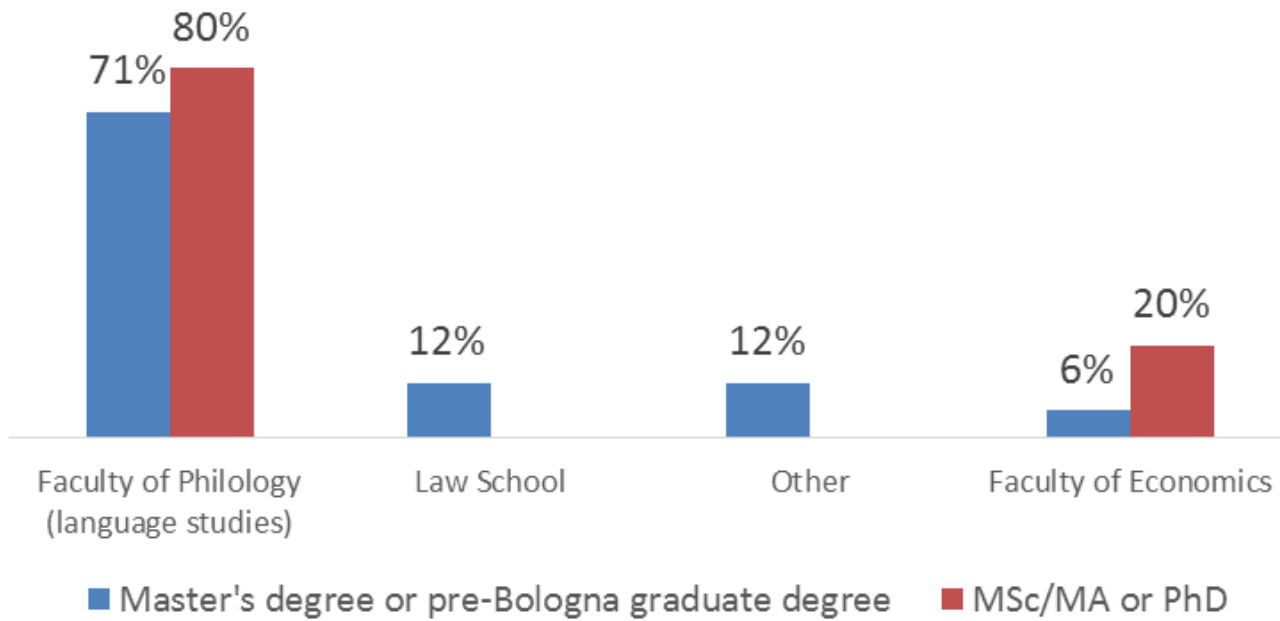
Education level

Education level



■ Master's degree or pre-Bologna graduate degree ■ MSc/MA or PhD

Degree obtained from the:



Introduction

„Permanent Court Interpreter“

- The task of a court interpreter is to convey accurately a message from one language into another, taking into account the differences between the systems, from various aspects:
 - legal and economic
 - administrative
 - educational
 - cultural, etc.

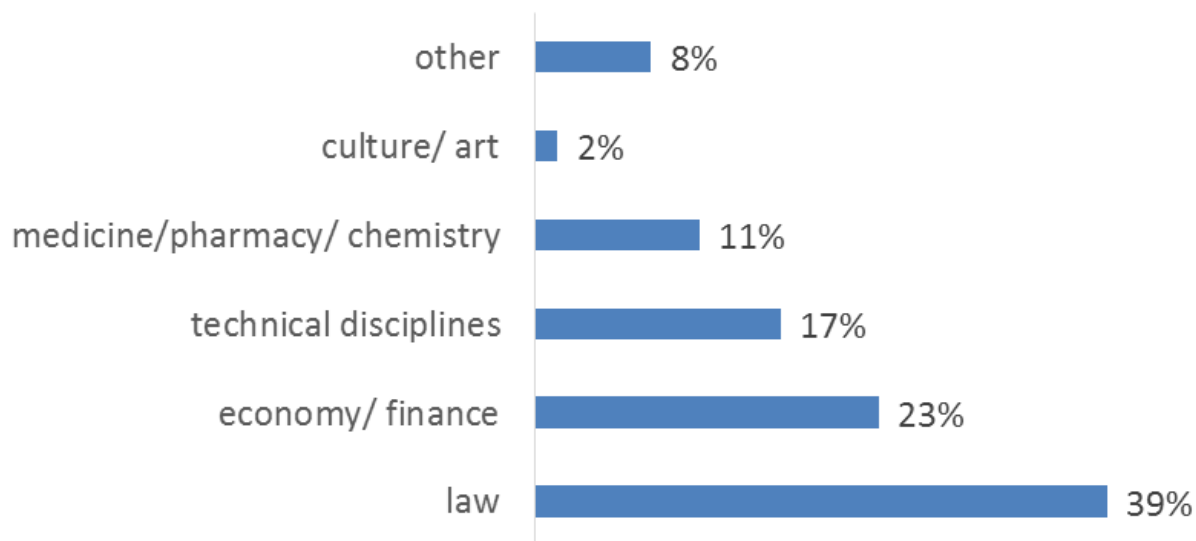
What has been covered and what is missing in the education of court interpreters?

Court interpreters' clients:

- **natural persons** (school reports, diplomas, extracts from public registers (birth, marriage, death certificates), medical documentation, documents used to claim certain rights, ...)
- **legal persons** (financial/ technical/ commercial documents, contracts, correspondence, ...)
- **public notaries** (corporate law - deeds of foundation, contracts of transfer of business shares, powers of attorney, purchase contracts,...)
- **courts/ lawyers** (court documents – action, appeal, request, objection; judgement, decree, ...) – the exam in legal basics is of theoretical nature and useful beyond dispute, but insufficient
- **police** (interrogation records)

Court Interpreters – written translations (by particular field)

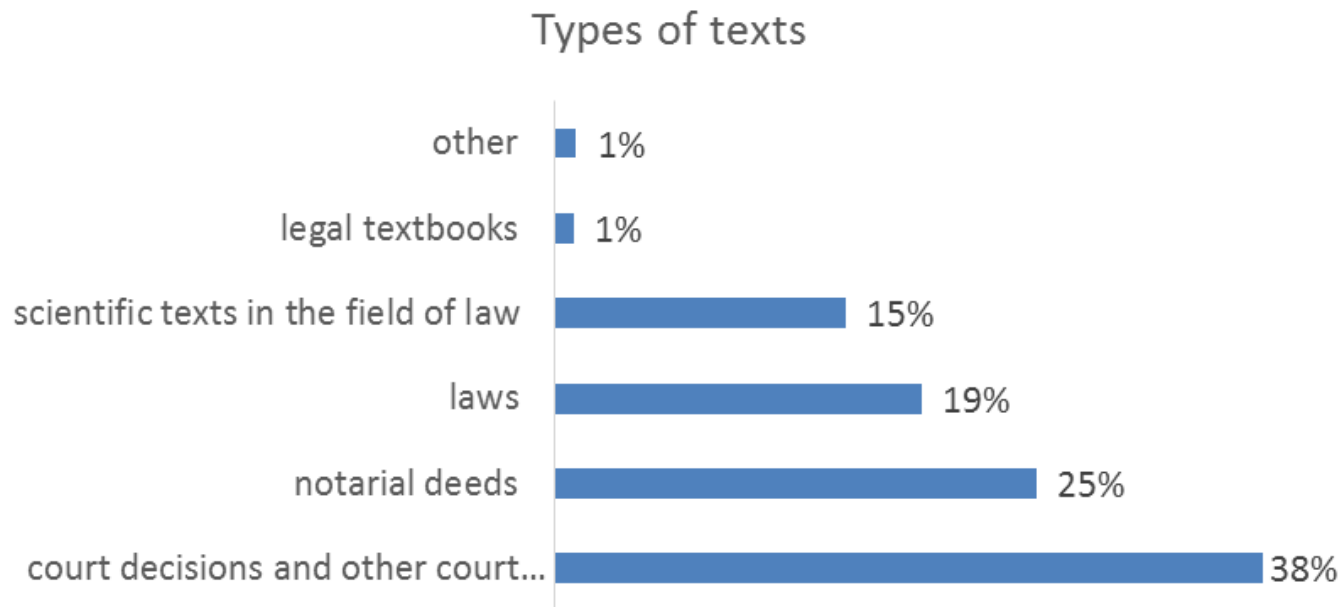
Certified translations (share of particular fields)



82% of respondents translate between 3-6 standard pages/day (i.e. „full-time translators“)

34% of respondents translate between 3-6 standard pages/day **in the field of law**

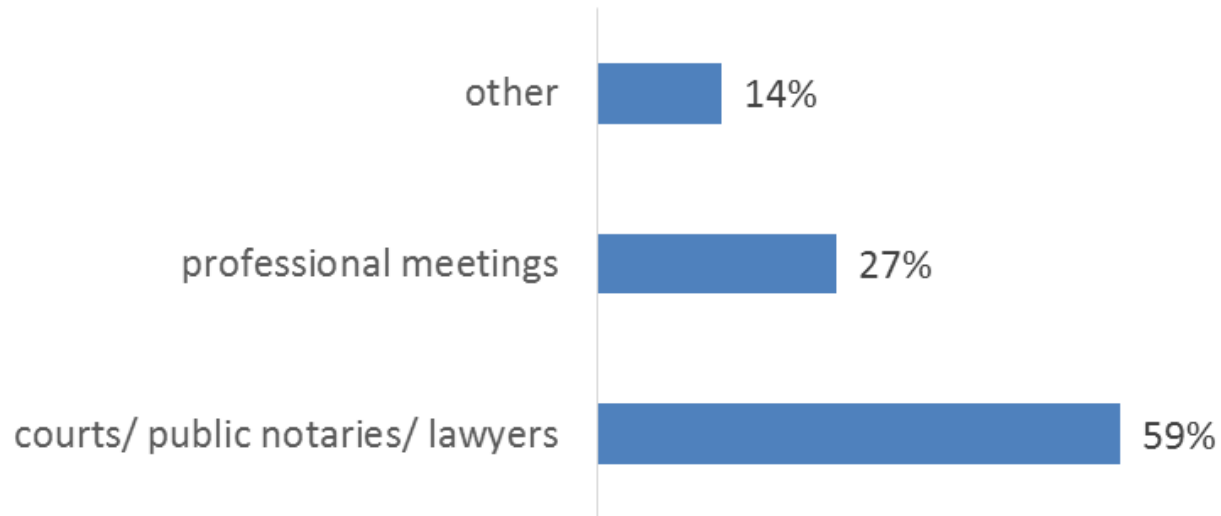
Court Interpreters – written translations (types of texts **within the field of law**)



63% for the requirements of **courts, notaries, lawyers**

Court Interpreters/ LITs – Interpreting

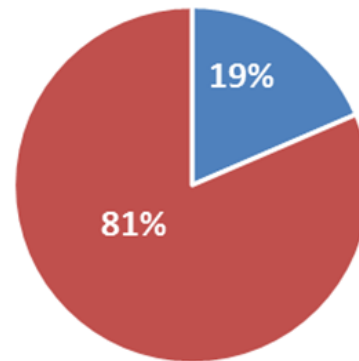
Interpreting in legal settings refers to:



85% provide interpreting services
83% of them **up to 6 hrs/week**

Formal education as Legal Translator

Formal education as Legal Translator?



■ Yes ■ No

Main learning sources:

- Everyday work 91%
- Specialised seminars 50%

Pain points

- **Specialized terminology** in various fields, LAW included
(issue for linguists and non-linguists alike)
- Non-linguists have no official **training in translating/interpreting skills**
(44% of respondents never attended any university courses related to translation)
- **Croatian language** competence is not tested at all if a candidate is a **non-linguist**
- Level of **general language** command
(issue for non-linguists, both **mother tongue** and **foreign language**)

Training with a court interpreters association (ACIT)

Mentors/coaches – court interpreters with many years of experience

Other participants:

- ❑ accountant/ auditor
- ❑ judge
- ❑ police inspector

16-hour training course, two 8-hour sessions (Saturdays only).

Training with a court interpreters association (ACIT)

1. General information

- Rights and obligations of court interpreters (appointment and term of office, stamp, nameplate, court interpreters journal)
- Legal forms of business for court interpreters (as secondary source of income, craft business, private limited company)

Training with a court interpreters association (ACIT)

2. Tutorials by specific fields

- Extracts from public registers (birth/ marriage, death certificates...)
- School reports/ diplomas
- Finance
- Working with public notaries
- Working with the court – main hearing (involving a court interpreter)
- Working with the police – interrogation (simulation of real-life situation)

Training with a court interpreters association (ACIT)

3. Practical work

- Practical work – written translation (producing and verifying by signature and seal)
- Simulation of consecutive interpreting
 - at a public notary's office
 - at a wedding ceremony
- Final paper – written translation produced at home, based on which a formal opinion on candidate's skills is made and submitted to the competent County Court

Appointment of a court interpreter













Finally, after all the prerequisites have been met, the candidate takes an oath before the President of the competent County Court:

*»I solemnly swear that I shall perform my duties as court interpreter **abiding by the rules of professional conduct, to the best of my knowledge and ability.**»*

Further education opportunities

- Occasional linguistic seminars organized by ACIT or other similar organizations (rather random, no structured approach or continuity)

Seminars in the field of law organised by ACIT so far:

- Seminar for English/German CIs (experienced ACIT members)  
- Translation as a multidisciplinary profession (dr. sc. Dragica Bukovčan, Zagreb)  
- Illusion of understanding when translating texts from the field of law or similar disciplines (dr. sc. Dragica Bukovčan, Zagreb)  
- Phraseology – law and economy (dr. sc. Dragica Bukovčan, Zagreb)  
- Linguistic features of the language of law (dr. sc. Ljubica Kordić, Osijek)  
- Characteristics of the Italian language of law (Zrinka Dujmović) 
- Examples of translations of French legal texts for EU institutions (Spomenka Husar) 

Any questions?

Thank you!