# 口譯員潛質：口譯員觀點

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　　口譯員須具備之潛質向來是口譯研究學者感興趣之議題，但相關實證研究較少。過去之文獻多半從理想的口譯實務工作中分析口譯員應具備之潛質，本研究則以問卷方式，調查臺灣三十三位會議口譯員對十三項潛質之看法，請他們在五點量表中依據潛質之重要性給予評分，並將知識、技巧及人格特質三個面向下的潛質按照重要性排序。事後並以訪談方式詢問口譯員對這些潛質之看法。調查結果顯示，口譯員認為「語言能力」、「原文理解力」及「原文理解速度」為最重要之潛質，而學生接受兩年專業口譯訓練之後，「多工分神」之技巧應可有最長足之進步。訪談結果顯示，口譯員認為「良好判斷力」、「邏輯思考」、「好奇心」及「溝通欲望」也是非常重要的潛質。

關鍵詞：口譯員、潛質、知識、技巧、人格特質

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# Interpreters' Views on the Necessary Aptitudes of Interpreters

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Interpreter aptitudes have long been a topic of interest, but not so often a focus of research. Past research has attempted to come up with a set of aptitudes that interpreters should possess by deducing from the ideal performance of an interpreter at work. This paper attempts to inquire into active interpreters' views on aptitude by using a questionnaire survey and a semi-structured interview. The questionnaire comprises three dimensions of aptitude that have been identified in past studies, namely *Knowledge, Skills*, and *Personality*, and asks interpreters to rank them in order of importance. Among a total of 13 aptitudes, *language proficiency, comprehension of source language*, and *speed of comprehension* were found to be significantly more important than the others, and it was further found that the skill of *multitasking* could be significantly improved after two years of professional training. Interviews with six of the 33 participants revealed that *common sense, logical thinking, curiosity*, and *the desire to communicate* are also important aptitudes.

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*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* defined "aptitude" as "an inherent ability, as for learning; a talent" (2006). Cronbach and Snow (1977) defined aptitude as any characteristic that predicts a person's probability of success under a given treatment. People who possess certain aptitudes are more ready to learn in a particular situation. This definition connotes that one who has aptitude possesses an advantage over others who are not endowed with the natural potential to learn and acquire new skills. Small wonder that music schools, tennis schools, and the like scout about for youngsters who have the aptitude to learn complex skills, practice for long hours, and build the physical and mental stamina to persevere in their future professional lives. Recruiters need to adopt various methods, including tests, observations, and sometimes pure intuition, to pick out the ones who would most likely succeed and go on to become outstanding performers and players.

Thus it seems reasonable for interpretation schools to use aptitude tests to select candidates who might prove to be more successful in completing the program and becoming qualified interpreters. Selecting candidates with aptitude for interpreting not only facilitates training, increases the possibility of successful completion of the courses, but also ensures that the resources invested by the training institutes would generate fruitful results. In addition, students with sufficient and appropriate aptitudes are likelier to encounter less frustration and disappointment during the course of training, possibly enjoy a greater level of confidence, and motivate themselves more to surmount the challenges.

Although there has been a rather consistent view of the "ideal interpreter" (see Table 1 in Russo 2011 for a review of the ideal interpreter profiles over a 40-year span), experts have yet to reach a consensus on whether it is more important to emphasize "already acquired skills", "the ability to learn interpreting skills", or "teachability" (Russo, 2011). This probably explains why it has been difficult for recruiters to compile a battery of effective aptitude tests to select interpreting students. Although interpreting schools around the world have been using admission tests to select students for decades, research has shown that most of these tests fail to predict the success rate of the students in their graduation exams (Timarová & Ungoed-Thomas, 2009). It is not premature to say that the difficulties encountered by using aptitude tests to select students rest in the fact that we have yet to identify what are the most important aptitudes of an interpreter, so it is consequently problematic to design admission tests that have predictive power.

Compared with other fields in interpreting studies, there has been little empirical research on the aptitudes for interpreting until very recently. What might constitute as interpreter aptitudes are often based on intuition of interpreters and experiences from trainers (Timarová & Ungoed-Thomas, 2009). However, it would be difficult methodologically to investigate interpreter aptitudes empirically without resorting to the aforementioned strategies, i.e., exploring the intuition of interpreters and inquiring the experience of trainers, because aptitudes cannot be conjured up by pure imagination. Retrospection and self-analysis of interpreters and observation from trainers should be treated as valid means to identify the aptitudes of an interpreter. A more pertinent issue is to verify these aptitudes empirically. From a trainer's perspective, it is even more important to rank these aptitudes in order of importance. Because training time is often limited to one or two years, trainers need to know whether or not they can leverage the aptitude of students to help them acquire the necessary skills and become qualified interpreters (Moser-Mercer, 1994). Therefore, it is critical to know what skills are trainable during the course period vis-à-vis what can only be left to students' aptitudes to carry them through the learning curve.

Past literature has identified several key dimensions to look for in aspiring interpreters. One that is reiterated in all studies is the linguistic proficiency of interpreters (Brisau, Godijns, & Meuleman, 1994; Gerver, Longely, Long, & Lambert, 1989; Lambert, 1988; Moser-Mercer, 1985; Moser-Mercer, 1994), which includes both active and passive competencies. Cognitive factors such as level of concentration, memory, speed of comprehension, analytical and synthetic ability, and multitasking are also mentioned frequently (Brisau et al., 1994; López Gómez, Bajo Molina, Padilla Benitez, & de Torres, 2007; Moser-Mercer, 1994; Russo & Pippa, 2004). In addition, a growing number of studies have begun to emphasize the importance of personality factors. Seasoned interpreters seem to exhibit common qualities, including assertiveness, resilience, curiosity, intelligence, confidence, and being able to handle stress (Gerver et al., 1989; Moser-Mercer, 1985; Schweda Nicholson, 2005; Shaw & Hughes, 2006).

With this myriad of aptitudes, the "ideal interpreter" seems to surface. However, taking training once again into consideration, the trainer must know what aptitudes students must possess. Therefore, these aptitudes need to be prioritized so that the trainers can come up with a list of "prerequisites" and use them as screening criteria. In addition, by analyzing these requisite aptitudes, trainers would better understand what is trainable vis-à-vis what is not within the limited training timeframe.

Although past research has identified a list of aptitudes to look for in students, there have been no studies on how these aptitudes are ranked according to their importance. This study hopes to investigate the views of professional conference interpreters in Taiwan by means of a survey questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. It is hoped that the results will shed light on how established interpreters look at the issue of interpreter aptitudes, and offer trainers future directions in the selection and training of students.

# Methods

## *Research Design*

The study is divided into two parts. The first part is a survey of professional interpreters in Taiwan by means of a structured questionnaire. The second part is a semi-structured interview of respondents from the survey that have volunteered to be interviewed. The purpose of this follow-up interview is to gain insight into their responses to the questionnaire, especially their answers for several open-ended questions.

## *Participants*

Forty-four professional interpreters who are either the researcher's colleagues in the booth or whom the researcher has met in other academic settings formed the sample of the survey. Invitations to take part in the survey were sent via email on May 26th, 2010. By June 4th, 15 questionnaires were collected. Reminders were sent on the same day, and by June 12th, another 18 responses were generated. A total of 33 questionnaires were collected. The overall response rate is 75%.

Due to scheduling conflicts, only six of the 19 respondents that agreed to be interviewed were able to take part in the group interview. A senior manager from an interpreting consultancy who has ten years of experience in hiring interpreters was also invited to take part in the group interview to provide a different perspective. The mean age of the six interpreters is 37.8, mean years of working experience is 10.8, and four of them have taught interpreting; among the four, only two are currently teaching. The mean years of teaching experience is 8.3 (see Table 1).

Table 1

*Profile of interviewees*

| No. | Gender | Age | Working language besides Chinese | Years of interpreting experience | Years of teaching experience | Currently teaching or not |
|-----|--------|-----|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | Female | 42 | English | 16 | 6 | No |
| 2 | Male | 46 | Japanese | 18 | 16 | Yes |
| 3 | Female | 32 | English | 5 | 0 | No |
| 4 | Female | 40 | English | 15 | 9 | Yes |
| 5 | Male | 38 | English | 10 | 2 | No |
| 6 | Female | 29 | English | 1 | 0 | No |
| 7* | Female | 37 | n/a | 10 | n/a | n/a |

*Participant 7 is a senior manager from a leading interpreting consultancy in Taiwan.

## Material and Procedure

**Questionnaire.** The questionnaire was designed in Chinese using an online tool, mySurvey (http://www.mysurvey.tw/), and was also administered online to encourage response. All questions were shown on one webpage to ease the process of responding. Each participant was given a URL link and an exclusive password to access the questionnaire. This enables the researcher to identify each participant for follow-up purposes.

A total of 19 questions were asked. In addition to background information, participants were asked whether they have taught interpreting before. The study hopes to investigate whether there will be significantly different responses between trainers and non-trainers.

The body of the questionnaire asked participants' opinion on three categories of aptitudes: knowledge, skill, and personality traits. Within each category of aptitudes, they were first asked to rate the importance of these aptitudes on a five-point Likert scale, and then rank the aptitudes within each category according to their importance. Participants were also offered the opportunity to add other aptitudes that they deemed important but not included in the questionnaire. Finally, participants were asked to rate the degree of improvement

students would make in each of these aptitudes-cum-competencies were they to receive two years of interpreting training (see Appendix for questionnaire).

The three categories of aptitudes are based on the classification mentioned in Moser-Mercer (1994). In order to avoid double-barreled questions and increase clarity, aptitudes within each category were slightly reformulated. Additional aptitudes derived from past literature were also added into the relevant categories. However, it was important not to overwhelm participants with too many aptitudes in one category, otherwise it would be difficult to rank.

These aptitudes were discussed and reviewed by the instructor and fellow classmates of a survey methodology class in which the researcher took at the Graduate Institute of Translation and Interpreting of National Taiwan Normal University. A pilot survey was also conducted three weeks prior to sending out the formal invitations. Feedbacks from the methodology class and the two respondents from the pilot survey were incorporated into the revision of the questionnaire. The final set of aptitudes is as follows:

I. Knowledge

  1. Mother tongue proficiency

  2. Foreign language proficiency

  3. General knowledge of the world

  4. Professional knowledge in a particular field

II. Skills

  1. Comprehension of source language

  2. Speed of comprehension

III. Public speaking skills

  1. Speed of production in target language

  2. Memory capacity

  3. Multitasking

III. Personality traits

  1. Stress tolerance

  2. Mental stamina

  3. Fast learning curve

**Interview.** Participants were asked in the questionnaire about their willingness to be further contacted for interview. Nineteen of the 33 respondents accepted the invitation, but due to scheduling conflicts, only six were able to attend the interview. Individual interviews were not feasible due to limited research time and availability of the busy interpreters, so a group interview was conducted as an alternative.

A semi-structured interview was conducted in Chinese before the participants dined at a restaurant in Taipei and lasted around two hours. Participants were first informed about the results of the survey, which included the score and ranking of each aptitude. Then they were asked to comment on each of the thirteen aptitudes, and to elaborate on why they thought a particular aptitude was relatively more important or unimportant. Each participant took turns to comment on an aptitude. If they brought up additional aptitudes that were not included in the questionnaire, they would be further prompted by the researcher to elaborate. After discussion on the first aptitude was exhausted, the researcher moved on to the second aptitude and continued until feedback on all thirteen aptitudes were collected. In addition to responding to the questions posed by the researcher, participants often engaged in lively discussions when they agreed or differed in their opinions. This situation carried on into the dinner, and generated some interesting feedbacks.

The interview was recorded on a digital recording device, then played-back and transcribed for coding and analysis. Segments for illustrative and explanatory purposes were translated into English by the researcher.

## *Data Analysis*

Statistical analyses were conducted using the SPSS® Statistics 19 software. In addition to descriptive statistics, several statistical analyses were done:

1. Reliability of questionnaire: Cronbach's $\alpha$ was used to determine the reliability of the questionnaire. Overall reliability of the questionnaire is high, Cronbach's $\alpha=.84$. The knowledge subscale has a relatively lower reliability, Cronbach's $\alpha=.56$. The skills, personality traits, and degree of improvement subscales had higher reliabilities, Cronbach's $\alpha$ were .82, .71, .81 respectively.

2. Independent t-tests were carried out to determine whether participants with different backgrounds would rate the importance of aptitudes

differently. Comparisons were made between different genders, teaching experiences, working languages, training background, and working experience.

3. One-way ANOVA and *post hoc* tests using the Bonferroni correction method were conducted to determine whether participants rated some aptitudes more important than others. Comparisons were made among the four aptitudes in the Knowledge category, six aptitudes in the Skill category, the three aptitudes in the Personality category, and all the aptitudes-cum-competencies in the Improvement ratings.

# Results

## *Background Information of Participants*

Among the 33 participants, 23 (69.7%) are female, 10 (30.3%) are male. Their mean age is 42, while the mean of years working as an interpreter is 11.7. In addition to Mandarin Chinese, 28 participants (84.8%) selected English as their other working language, 4 chose Japanese (12.1%), and 1 chose Korean (3.0%).

Twenty-eight (84.8%) participants have received formal interpreting training at a graduate level institute for at least one year, while the remaining five (15.2%) have not. It is interesting to note that the mean age of those who have received formal training is younger ($M$=39.7) than those who have not ($M$=53.0), and a *t*-test revealed that this difference was significant $t(31)$=3.19, $p$=.003. Compared with European languages, graduate level Chinese/English interpreting programs were founded rather late[1], so this possibly explains why some senior interpreters had not received formal training.

Two-thirds of the participants have taught conference interpreting, and the mean years of teaching experience is 9.1 years. Sixteen of the 33 participants are currently teaching conference interpreting.

## *Importance of Aptitudes*

Participants were asked to rate the importance of 13 aptitudes in three categories on a five-point Likert scale.

**Knowledge aptitudes.** Table 2 shows the participants' response to knowledge aptitudes. Of the four knowledge aptitudes, most interpreters regarded language proficiency as very important; *mother tongue proficiency* received an average of 4.91, slightly higher than the 4.85 of *foreign language proficiency. Professional knowledge in a particular field* was rated the least important among the four knowledge aptitudes, with a mean of 3.55, which is significantly lower than all the other three aptitudes.

There is a significant difference in terms of how interpreters rated the four knowledge aptitudes, $F(3,128)=40.74$, $p<.05$. Further *post hoc* tests showed that the only pair of knowledge aptitudes that was not rated significantly differently was *mother tongue proficiency* and *foreign language proficiency*. The ratings of all other pairs of knowledge aptitudes reached significant difference ($p<.01$).

Table 2

*Importance of knowledge aptitudes*

| | 1=Not important | 2=Less important | 3=Rather important | 4=Quite important | 5=Very important | Mean SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mother tongue proficiency | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 9.1% | **30** **90.9%** | 4.91 .292 |
| Foreign language proficiency | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 15.2% | **28** **84.8%** | 4.85 .364 |
| General knowledge of the world | 0 | 0 | 3 9.1% | **18** **54.5%** | 12 36.4% | 4.27 .626 |
| Professional knowledge in a particular field | 0 | 4 12.1% | 10 30.3% | **16** **48.5%** | 3 9.1% | 3.55 .833 |

*Note.* Under the 5-point columns, the numbers on the top row represent frequency, while the numbers on the bottom row represent the percentage of respondents that chose this rating. Numbers in bold represent the highest frequency and percentage in that particular item.

**Skill aptitudes.** Of the six skills aptitudes, *Comprehension of source language* was given the highest rating, with a mean of 4.85. *Speed of comprehension* followed with a mean of 4.55. *Multitasking* and *speed of production in target language* received 4.36

and 4.33 respectively, while *public speaking skills* and *memory capacity* were rated the least important, with means of 4.00 and 3.88 respectively (see Table 3).

There is a significant difference in terms of how interpreters rated the skill aptitudes, $F(5,192)=9.61$, $p<.05$. Further *post hoc* tests revealed that *comprehension of source language* is rated significantly higher than all other aptitudes ($p<.05$) bar *speed of comprehension*. *Speed of comprehension* is only rated significantly higher than *public speaking* ($p<.01$) and *multitasking* ($p<.01$). *Multitasking* is only rated significantly higher than *memory capacity* ($p=.05$).

Table 3

*Importance of skills aptitudes*

| | 1=Not important | 2=Less important | 3=Rather important | 4=Quite important | 5=Very important | Mean SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Comprehension of source language | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **28** **84.8%** | 4.85 .364 |
| Speed of comprehension | 0 | 0 | 1 3% | 13 39.4% | **19** **57.6%** | 4.55 .564 |
| Public speaking skills | 0 | 1 3% | 7 21.2% | **16** **48.5%** | 9 27.3% | 4.00 .791 |
| Speed of production in target language | 0 | 0 | 2 6.1% | **18** **54.5%** | 13 39.4% | 4.33 .595 |
| Memory capacity | 0 | 2 6.1% | 7 21.2% | **17** **51.5%** | 7 21.2% | 3.88 .820 |
| Multitasking | 0 | 0 | 4 12.1% | 13 39.4% | **16** **48.5%** | 4.36 .699 |

*Note.* Under the 5-point columns, the numbers on the top row represent frequency, while the numbers on the bottom row represent the percentage of respondents that chose this rating. Numbers in bold represent the highest frequency and percentage in that particular item.

**Personality aptitudes.** Of the three personality traits aptitudes, mean rating of *stress tolerance* and *fast learning curve* was equivalent (4.70), while *mental stamina* was rated least important (4.48) among the three (see Table 4).

One-way ANOVA analysis revealed that there was no significant difference in how participants rated the three personality aptitudes, $F(2,96)=1.69$, $p=.19$. This means that interpreters felt that the three personality aptitudes were equally important.

Table 4

*Importance of personality traits aptitudes*

|  | 1=Not important | 2=Less important | 3=Rather important | 4=Quite important | 5=Very important | Mean SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Stress tolerance | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | **23** | 4.70 |
|  |  |  |  | 30.3% | **69.7%** | .467 |
| Mental stamina | 0 | 0 | 1 | 15 | **17** | 4.48 |
|  |  |  | 3% | 45.5% | **51.5%** | .566 |
| Fast learning curve | 0 | 0 | 2 | 6 | **25** | 4.70 |
|  |  |  | 6.1% | 18.2% | **75.8%** | .585 |

*Note.* Under the 5-point columns, the numbers on the top row represent frequency, while the numbers on the bottom row represent the percentage of respondents that chose this rating. Numbers in bold represent the highest frequency and percentage in that particular item.

## *Ranking of Aptitudes*

After rating the importance of each aptitude, participants were then asked to rank the set of aptitudes within each category. Although instructions require participants to avoid giving any two aptitudes the same ranking, some partici-pants failed to answer in the right format, resulting in the discrepancy between the sample size and the actual responses. There were 28 valid responses in the knowledge and skills category, and 29 in the personality traits category.

Among the four aptitudes in the knowledge category, *mother tongue proficiency* was ranked *most important* 17 times out of 28 valid responses. All but one either ranked it in first or second place. *Foreign language proficiency* was also ranked first or second by 26 participants, but was placed first fewer times than *mother tongue proficiency*. *General knowledge of the world* was ranked third most frequently, while *professional knowledge in a particular field* was ranked last by all participants but one (see Figure 1). Participants seem to be congruent in their rankings of knowledge aptitudes, as illustrated by the obvious peaks in the figure.
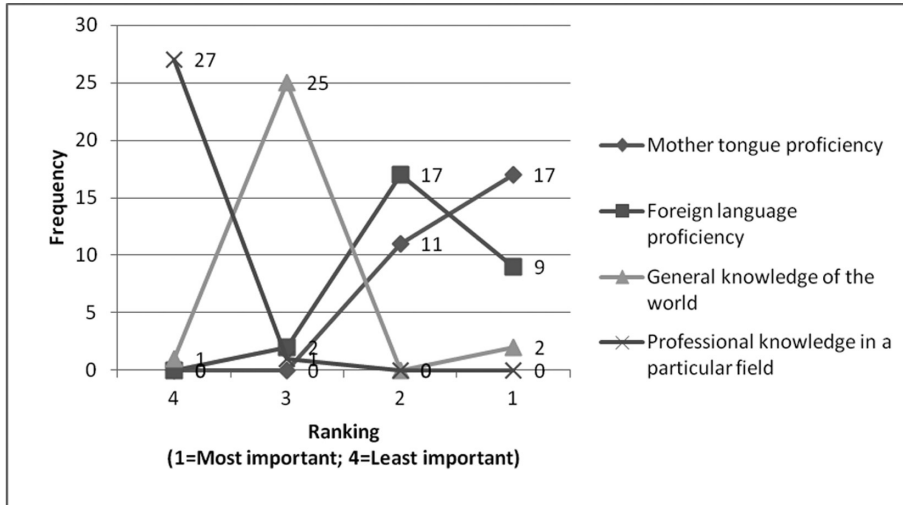
*Figure 1*. Ranking of knowledge aptitudes

　　Less consensus was reached in the skills category. Although *comprehension of source language* and *speed of comprehension* were ranked first and second respectively most frequently, a far murkier picture emerged out of the remaining four aptitudes. *Speed of production in target language* and *multitasking* were more frequently ranked in the middle, with the former seemingly more important than the latter, as it had more higher-rankings. *Memory capacity* and *public speaking skills* were more frequently ranked at the bottom (see Figure 2).
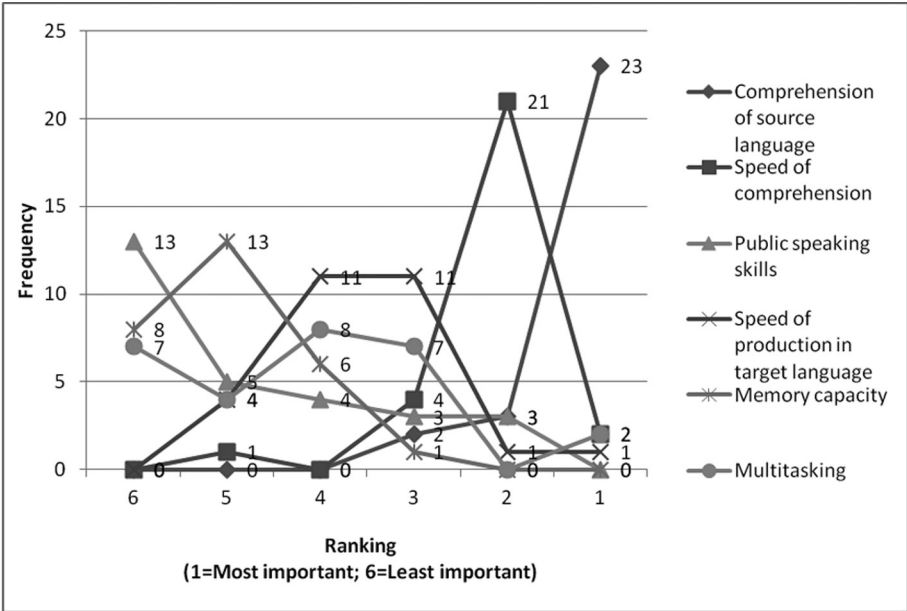
*Figure 2*. Ranking of skills aptitudes

Opinions of interpreters varied widely in the personality traits category. It is difficult to identify a clear "winner" among the three aptitudes, but *stress tolerance* was ranked first 12 times and last only 5 times, while *fast learning curve* was ranked first 11 times, second 8 times, and last 10 times. *Mental stamina* was ranked last 14 times, the most frequent among the three aptitudes, but still there were 6 interpreters who think that it is the most important personality traits aptitude (see Figure 3).
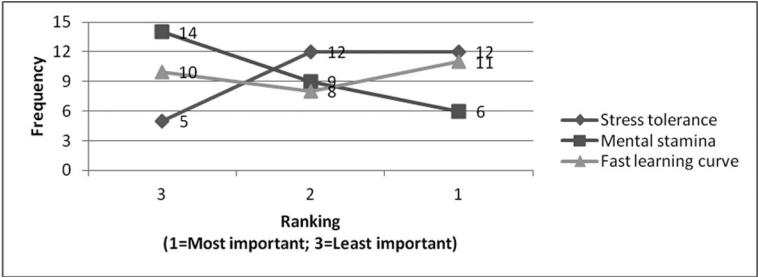


*Figure 3*. Ranking of personality traits aptitudes

### *Degree of Improvement*

Participants were asked to rate the degree of improvement students would make in each of these aptitudes-cum-competencies were they to receive two years of interpreting training.

Participants think that *multitasking*, *comprehension of source language*, and *speed of production in target language* are the top three aptitudes-cum-competencies that can be improved with training, receiving mean ratings of 4.30, 3.94, and 3.94 respectively. On the other hand, *mother tongue proficiency*, *memory capacity*, and *stress tolerance* would not improve as much, each receiving mean ratings of 3.30, 3.33, and 3.45.

There is a significant difference in terms of how interpreters rated the degree of improvement of each aptitude $F(12, 416)=4.95$, $p<.05$. One-way ANOVA analysis revealed that the aptitude-cum-competency that would be most improved after training, *multitasking*, was given a significantly higher rating than six of the twelve other aptitudes ($p<.05$), including *mother tongue proficiency, professional knowledge in a particular field, memory capacity, stress tolerance, mental stamina,* and *fast learning curve* (see Table 5).

### *Additional Aptitudes*

Participants were given the opportunity to add additional aptitudes that they deemed important but were not included in the three categories.

On average, participants were not especially enthusiastic in providing additional feedbacks, especially in the knowledge and skills category. One Japanese interpreter added "knowledge of colloquial expressions" in the knowledge category. Another participant added "ability to mimic and imitate" in the skills category.

However, one third of the participants provided additional feedback in the personality traits category. Interpreters believe that the following aptitudes are also important: a positive attitude, willingness to learn, likes challenges, curiosity, empathy, intuition, humorous, resilience. These traits are further explored in a group interview conducted in the second phase of the study.

Table 5

*Possible degree of improvement after receiving two years of training*

| | 1=<br>None | 2=<br>Minor | 3=<br>Some | 4=<br>Major | 5=<br>Huge | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mother tongue proficiency | 0 | 2<br>6.1% | **19**<br>**57.6%** | 12<br>36.4% | 0 | 3.30 |
| Foreign language proficiency | 0 | 0 | 10<br>30.3% | **16**<br>**48.5%** | 7<br>21.2% | 3.91 |
| General knowledge of the world | 0 | 2 6.1% | 6<br>18.2% | **18**<br>**54.5%** | 7<br>21.2% | 3.91 |
| Professional knowledge in a particular field | 0 | 3 9.1% | 13<br>39.4% | **15**<br>**45.5%** | 2 6.1% | 3.48 |
| Comprehension of source language | 0 | 0 | 8<br>24.2% | **19**<br>**57.6%** | 6<br>18.2% | 3.94 |
| Speed of comprehension | 0 | 1<br>3% | 11<br>33.3% | **17**<br>**51.5%** | 4<br>12.1% | 3.73 |
| Public speaking skills | 0 | 1<br>3% | **13**<br>**39.4%** | 12<br>36.4% | 7<br>21.2% | 3.76 |
| Speed of production in target language | 0 | 1<br>3% | 5<br>15.2% | **22**<br>**66.7%** | 5<br>15.2% | 3.94 |
| Memory capacity | 0 | 4<br>12.1% | **17**<br>**51.5%** | 9<br>27.3% | 3 9.1% | 3.33 |
| Multitasking | 0 | 0 | 4<br>12.1% | **15**<br>**45.5%** | 14<br>42.4% | 4.30 |
| Stress tolerance | 0 | 4<br>12.1% | **14**<br>**42.4%** | 11<br>33.3% | 4<br>12.1% | 3.45 |
| Mental stamina | 0 | 4<br>12.1% | 10<br>30.3% | **14**<br>**42.4%** | 5<br>15.2% | 3.61 |
| Fast learning curve | 0 | 1<br>3% | **16**<br>**48.5%** | 14<br>42.4% | 2 6.1% | 3.52 |

*Note.* Under the 5-point columns, the numbers on the top row represent frequency, while the numbers on the bottom row represent the percentage of respondents that chose this rating. Numbers in bold represent the highest frequency and percentage in that particular item.

## *Intergroup Comparison*

It was predicted that participants with different backgrounds might have different views. However, independent *t*-tests revealed that no significant differences were found between the views of male and female interpreters, nor were there significant differences between trainers and non-trainers. In addition, whether interpreters are currently teaching conference interpreting or not did not contribute to any significant differences in their views.

However, interpreters who have taught more than nine years (the mean years of teaching experience) perceived two aptitudes to be more important when compared against those who have taught for less than nine years: *memory capacity* and *fast learning curve*. In addition, teachers who have taught longer tend to have a firmer belief in improving the students' *memory capacity* were they to receive two years of formal interpreting training (see Table 6). The effect size of Pearson's correlation *r* reflects a medium to large effect in all three situations.

Table 6

*Mean rating of teachers with more vs. less than 9 years of teaching experience*

| Aptitude/Improvement | > 9, n=8 | <9, n=14 | p value | r |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Memory capacity | 4.38 | 3.50 | .025 | .48 |
| Fast learning curve | 5.00 | 4.50 | .029 | .48 |
| Improvement of memory capacity | 3.88 | 2.93 | .006 | .56 |

Interpreters working in Japanese and English differed in their opinions about the importance of *multitasking* and *fast learning curve*. Japanese interpreters regarded these two aptitudes to be more important than did English interpreters (see Table 7). However, the effect size *r* is medium to small, so the differences might not be as important as the figures suggest.

Table 7

*Mean rating of Japanese vs. English interpreters*

| Aptitude | Japanese, n=4 | English, n=29 | p value | r |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Multitasking | 5.00 | 4.25 | .000 | .36 |
| Fast learning curve | 5.00 | 4.64 | .005 | .20 |

Interpreters who have received formal interpreting training (n=28), when compared against those who have not (n=5), perceived four aptitudes to be significantly less important: *foreign language proficiency, comprehension of source language, speed of comprehension,* and *fast learning curve.* In addition, they tend to believe that it is less likely for students to improve their *comprehension of source language* and *multitasking* skills (see Table 8). The effect size *r* is medium to large. This seems to run contrary to the intuition that those who have received formal training should have more faith in the effectiveness of training. It could possibly reflect the interpreters' disillusionment or disappointment of the quality of education and training they received back in school. It is also possible that these interpreting school graduates had gone through a selection process before being admitted, so they already possess qualities of which they are unaware, thus giving less credit to these aptitudes.

Table 8

*Mean rating of interpreters who have vs. have not received formal training*

| Aptitude/Improvement | Have, n=28 | Have not, n=5 | *p value* | *r* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Foreign language proficiency | 4.82 | 5.00 | .022 | .40 |
| Comprehension of source language | 4.82 | 5.00 | .022 | .40 |
| Speed of comprehension | 4.46 | 5.00 | .000 | .66 |
| Fast learning curve | 4.64 | 5.00 | .005 | .48 |
| Improvement of comprehension of source language | 3.20 | 4.07 | .005 | .48 |
| Improvement of multitasking | 3.60 | 4.43 | .010 | .44 |

Interpreters who have more years of working experience when compared against junior interpreters perceive *general knowledge of the world, comprehension of source language,* and *mental stamina* to be more important (see Table 9). Seniority has a medium effect.

Table 9

*Mean rating of senior\* vs. junior interpreters*

| Aptitude | Senior, n=16 | Junior, n=17 | p value | r |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| General knowledge of the world | 4.56 | 4.00 | .008 | .42 |
| Comprehension of source language | 5.00 | 4.71 | .020 | .41 |
| Mental stamina | 3.75 | 3.47 | .044 | .35 |

*Mean years of working experience (11.7) is used as cut-off point.

## *Interview*

**Knowledge aptitudes.** Within the knowledge category, interpreters unanimously agreed during the interview that language proficiency is so important that the level of mastery must be ensured during the selection of students, otherwise they would have difficulties acquiring the necessary skills. They pointed out that most of the aptitudes within the skills category are still related to language proficiency, for example *comprehension of source language, speed of comprehension, speed of production in target language*, and even *public speaking skills* to a certain extent. The "skills and techniques" that are taught during training need to leverage the students' existing language abilities.

> *I don't think you can improve your language proficiency that much within two years, so if you don't have it at the beginning, you're unlikely to learn the skills.* (Interpreter 6)

> *For example, in a direct sales rally, you have to choose words that can arouse emotions. You can say that it's a kind of public speaking skill, I mean, how to stir up the crowd, but it still boils down to whether or not your language ability is good enough to choose the right words and use the right intonation.* (Interpreter 2)

*Professional knowledge in a particular field* received less regard from interpreters, because they think that "specific knowledge" can be attained through the accumulation of work experience. New knowledge is emerging so fast that having a fast learning curve is much more important than immersing oneself in acquiring professional knowledge. Although it would be nice to be an expert in a particular field, it is not a prerequisite for an interpreting student. What is more important for interpreters is to have the ability to "make sense" from the messages.

Interpreters believe that *general knowledge of the world* is important, but they pointed out that this is different from "common sense", and were it to be listed as an aptitude, it might have received an even higher rating than *general knowledge of the world*. Common sense, according to the *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary,* is "sound and prudent judgment based on a simple perception of the situation or fact" (2010). Interpreters agreed that having good sense and sound judgment is crucial.

> *You can always memorize facts or whatever appears on the conference materials, but remember that interpreters are always dealing with new messages. It is impossible for you to know everything, so you have to have the ability to "make sense" from the speaker's*

*speech. It's like formulating meaning out of something you don't know. Of course that ability depends partly on the general knowledge you have, and the preparations you've made, but more importantly, interpreters need to make right judgments in a very short time frame.* (Interpreter 1)

*Students who do not have a good common sense often lack the ability to think logically. They just don't understand the logical transitions between paragraphs even after I've explained to them. They can't make sense of the causality; they don't understand why the speaker said this first and then moved on to say that. I wonder whether this is because they've never been trained to reason logically, or logical thinking is something that has to be developed since young, because it seems that you can't train them to think logically after they've gone so far in their academic lives.* (Interpreter 4)

Interpreter 4's remarks spurred a lively discussion on "logical thinking". Interpreters could not reach a consensus on whether *logical thinking* is a knowledge aptitude or a personality trait, because they think it partially depends on the way students were trained to think, but it also relies on whether students have formed the habit to think logically. When the researcher asked the interpreters whether they would admit a student with a literature background or an engineering background, all other things being equal, all six interpreters favored the engineer.

*I find interpreters with engineering and science backgrounds to be very competent. They're always able to speak clearly about something, even if they don't totally understand. They seem to be able to extract the logic from the message, and they never talk gibberish even if they don't understand. I think it has something to do with the way they are trained. They form the habit of perceiving the world in a logical way.* (Interpreter 1)

Interpreters were very impassioned when they brought up the concept of *common sense* and *logical thinking*. However, trainers among the interviewees lamented that most young engineers or scientists in Taiwan do not pursue an interpreting career, so it is crucial to find an appropriate way to assess the quality of *common sense* and ability of *logical thinking* that students, usually literature or language majors, possess.

**Skills aptitudes.** Interpreters were much less excited when discussing skills aptitudes. They believe that this is the "task and duty" of interpreting schools, and most of the skills are related to language proficiency, so these should not be regarded as prerequisites of interpreting students. This could explain why

participants of the survey on average rated skills aptitudes to be more likely to be improved after receiving training (see Table 10).

Table 10

*Mean rating of categories*

| Aptitude category | Importance | Degree of Improvement |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Knowledge | 4.40 | 3.65 |
| Skills | 4.33 | 3.83 |
| Personality traits | 4.63 | 3.53 |

However, the senior manager of the interpreting consultancy emphasized the importance of *speed of production in target language*. She commented that this is usually the only criterion clients are capable of using to judge the performance of interpreters. She expressed her frustration when explaining to clients that speed of delivery does not guarantee quality, because interpreters sometimes need to wait for additional information, or they simply summarize the information in a more concise and comprehensible manner. However, clients often are quite defensive and insist that interpreters need to "keep up with the speaker".

> *You should either recruit students who can speak fast, or train them in school. Otherwise they would be at a disadvantage on the market. Sometimes I can't even assign cases to two interpreters who vary greatly in their talking speed. The one who speaks comparatively slower will become the target of complaint by the client and audience.* (Senior manager of interpreting consultancy)

This generated a small discussion on "speaking styles". Some interpreters think that speaking styles are innate and difficult to change. Others think that it is possible to "speed up" a slow speaker through training, for example, asking them to practice shadowing in the booth. This is reflected in the results of the questionnaire, as *speed of production in target language* is one of the top three aptitude-cum-competencies that can be improved most through training. Eventually, interpreters agreed that they need to be able to speak fast and slowly, as they need to adapt to a wide array of speaker's speaking styles.

Interviewees do not necessarily have a firm grasp of the various theories of memory as proposed in cognitive psychology, but they still commented on the issue of *memory capacity*. They mentioned that since memory includes long term, short term, and working memory, it is difficult to rate the importance of this aptitude consistently, because different interpreting modes might require strengths in different kinds of memories. For example, simultaneous interpreting would require a good working memory, while long term memory might not be as relevant. In contrast, short term memory would be very important during consecutive interpreting. Nevertheless, two interpreters believe it is not the memory capacity that matters, but whether or not students have the ability to comprehend, analyze, and organize the messages in a logical manner. If they know how to listen with a logical ear, *memory capacity* would not be an issue; rather, *memory capacity* becomes a function of *logical thinking*.

> *The reason why they can't remember is because they listen to things in a linear mode. You need to teach them to use logic to analyze the incoming messages and "store" these bits of information in layers and compartments. This makes the messages more compact and increases your capacity to memorize.* (Interpreter 2)

Interpreters returned to the issue of *logical thinking* after the remarks from Interpreter 2 and reiterated the importance of recruiting students that can think logically.

**Personality traits.** Interpreters found *mental stamina* and *stress tolerance* to be perplexing, as both seemed overlapping. But they agreed that both are important, as interpreters face tremendous stress at work.

"Curiosity" was mentioned at least five times in the survey, so interpreters were asked to elaborate on this issue. It was revealed that curiosity includes an active attitude to pursue knowledge, and a passive attitude of not rejecting any kind of knowledge.

> *You can't say, "Ah, this is so boring, I don't want to know anything about it," or "That has nothing to do with me. I'm not interested." You have to be genuinely interested in learning, even if knowledge is sometimes force-fed to you. Otherwise, you'll be out of the game in no time.* (Interpreter 3)

Curiosity is translated in the classroom into a willingness to learn. This means more than just writing homework, practicing techniques, or paying attention in class. Being willing to learn speaks volumes about the students' com-

mitment later in the profession, and can become an indicator of perseverance and resilience when they encounter setbacks either in school or on the market.

> *If you are willing to learn, you usually have a positive attitude. When you have a positive attitude, conferences that seem irrelevant at the beginning might become interesting. Even if you decide that it's still very boring, at least you'll try your best to interpret.* (Interpreter 5)

However, "positive attitudes" or "willingness to learn" are difficult to detect at the admission stage, because these are endogenous qualities that can only be observed throughout a period of time or when opportunities allow students to exhibit these qualities. Interpreters believe that this can somehow be resolved by looking at the students' "desire to communicate". Interpreting eventually is about communication, so the desire to communicate needs to be strong enough to "get the message across".

> *The desire to get the message across and facilitate communication is also a very important quality that is difficult to teach. It's something the audience can hear in the interpreter's voice, delivery, and attitude, even if they can't see us.* (Interpreter 6)

> *We often wish for speakers that have the desire to communicate. We always despise those who only come to flaunt their expertise or treat the event as a ritual. But we forget that we are the ears and voice of the speaker, so if we also sound bland and "just doing our job", then the audience would find it hard to endure us for an entire day.* (Interpreter 1)

> *When you want to communicate, you'll eventually find the words to express the meaning. When you want to communicate, you'll forget that you've been doing this for an entire day and focus your attention on the task instead.* (Interpreter 5)

When people have the desire to communicate, they would endeavor in every manner possible to let their audience understand. For interpreters, this means that they would use language that the audience is familiar with, imbue their interpretations with paralinguistic features that facilitate comprehension, and deliver it in a way that would effectively entice the audience throughout the conference. Prosodic features, facial expressions, and body gestures not only signal the emotions of the interpreter, but also reveal his or her desire to communicate. Interpreters also believe that when this desire is strong enough, they

will not be aware of time and fatigue.

It is interesting to note that during the interview, interpreters seldom mentioned the three personality traits aptitudes in the questionnaire. Instead, they focused on curiosity and the desire to communicate, among others. One possible explanation is that, unlike language proficiency, the aptitudes in this dimension were not comprehensive and representative enough, so interpreters were inclined to provide more feedbacks, and they have an extraordinarily strong feeling for "curiosity" and the "desire to communicate". Another explanation may be that the participants of the interview are themselves successful professional interpreters, so they possess to a very high degree the qualities mentioned in the questionnaire. That is why they do not sense the obstacles that might be hindering the progress of those who lack those qualities, so they did not feel it was necessary to elaborate on these qualities. In addition, *stress tolerance* and *mental stamina* could be incorporated into the desire to communicate, while *fast learning curve* could be a part of curiosity and even logical thinking.

When prompted to name "definite musts" in aspiring interpreters, interpreters readily agreed that "language proficiency" and "logical thinking" are the two most important aptitudes. These aptitudes are regarded as "less teachable", so they must be existent in the students before they start learning interpreting. Although personality traits are also "less teachable", these qualities are more determinative when the students have completed their trainings and become professional interpreters. Interpreters who are curious, positive, and willing to learn and communicate will not only perform well on the job, but also enjoy the job of interpreting. These qualities seem to distinguish the best interpreters from the average ones.

# Discussion and Conclusion

## *Discrepancy Between Rating and Ranking of Aptitudes*

It was predicted that most if not all of the aptitudes included in the questionnaire would receive a high rating by interpreters, as these aptitudes have already been identified previously by other researchers as prerequisites for learning interpreting. Therefore, a more important goal of this study is to discover how interpreters prioritize these aptitudes.

　　The rankings that were given to the aptitudes within the knowledge and personality traits categories were largely consistent with the order of importance as reflected by the mean scores (see Table 11). The only discrepancies occurred in the bottom four aptitudes in the skills category.

Table 11

*Comparison of rating order vs. ranking order*

| Category | Rating | Ranking |
|---|---|---|
| Knowledge | 1. Mother tongue proficiency | 1. Mother tongue proficiency |
| | 2. Foreign language proficiency | 2. Foreign language proficiency |
| | 3. General knowledge of the world | 3. General knowledge of the world |
| | 4. Professional knowledge in a particular field | 4. Professional knowledge in a particular field |
| Skills | 1. Comprehension of source language | 1. Comprehension of source language |
| | 2. Speed of comprehension | 2. Speed of comprehension |
| | 3. Multitasking | 3. Speed of production in target language |
| | 4. Speed of production in target language | 4. Multitasking |
| | 5. Public speaking skill | 5. Memory capacity |
| | 6. Memory capacity | 6. Public speaking skill |
| Personality Traits | 1. Stress tolerance | 1. Stress tolerance |
| | 2. Fast learning curve | 2. Fast learning curve |
| | 3. Mental stamina | 3. Mental stamina |

Interpreters believe that this discrepancy resulted from the different contexts that were in their minds while answering the questions. For example, they probably rated both *multitasking* and *speed of production in target language* as important aptitudes (there was no statistically significant difference between the ratings of these two aptitudes, $p>.05$). However, upon ranking the two, *speed of production in target language* became more important, because interpreters need to utter the rendition as soon as the speaker stops and refrain from being lengthy during consecutive interpreting. They also need to be able to catch up with the speaker

during simultaneous interpreting. On the other hand, the participants probably associated *multitasking* with SI only while they were ranking the skill aptitudes. Since *speed of production in target language* seems applicable to both CI and SI, while participants may not readily associate *multitasking* with CI, it is likely that the interpreters ranked the former aptitude higher.

Another possible explanation for the discrepancy is the similar importance of these aptitudes. Past literature has repeatedly mentioned these thirteen aptitudes as important prerequisites of an interpreter, and participants might probably think that all of them are equally important. The difficulty of categorically and clearly prioritizing these aptitudes probably caused the discrepancy between rating and ranking.

## Already Acquired Skills vs. "Teachability"

When screening students for interpreting training, Russo (2011) highlighted the difficulty of whether toselect them on the basis of skills they already possess, their ability to learn, or their "teachability". The third part of the questionnaire asked participants to rate the degree of improvement students would make in each of these aptitudes-cum-competencies were they to receive two years of interpreting training. The results from this part of the questionnaire could be viewed as interpreters' reflections and opinions on whether certain abilities could be taught or not. The top and bottom five aptitudes are shown in Table 12. These results can be mapped against Russo's comments and label the aptitudes as "teachable", "already acquired skills", or "ability to learn".

The top three are all skill aptitudes, and can be conveniently labeled as "teachable" items in a training program, so they do not necessarily have to be tested in an entrance exam.　But note that *comprehension of source language* and *speed of production in the target language* are invariably parts of language proficiency. By the same token, *foreign language proficiency* needs to be tested as well, despite the fact that it could be taught and improved.　The interpreters' comments in the interview seemed to be at odds with the survey results at first glance, but this actually reinforces the importance of language proficiency. Students need to meet minimum standards when they enter, and reach a much higher level when they graduate. As for *general knowledge*, it is quite natural for students to learn and know more during the course of training, because they would be exposed to various subject matters.

Table 12

*Top and bottom five aptitudes that could be improved with training*

| Top five | | Bottom five | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Aptitude | Rating | Aptitudes | Rating |
| 1. Multitasking | 4.30 | 1. Mother tongue proficiency | 3.30 |
| 2. Comprehension of source language | 3.94 | 2. Memory capacity | 3.33 |
| 3. Speed of production in target language | 3.94 | 3. Stress tolerance | 3.45 |
| 4. Foreign language proficiency | 3.91 | 4. Professional knowledge in a particular field | 3.48 |
| 5. General knowledge | 3.91 | 5. Fast learning curve | 3.52 |

The bottom five consists of aptitudes from all three categories. It is difficult to conveniently label them as "already acquired skills", but they do seem difficult to teach. *Mother tongue proficiency* can be more difficult to improve, not only because it must have reached a level of proficiency in which room for improvement is far less than that of foreign languages, but also because it would be more difficult to cultivate awareness to correcting bad habits accumulated over the years. In addition, the majority of class time would be devoted to enhancing foreign language proficiency and learning interpreting skills; not much time is left for perfecting the mother tongue. *Memory capacity* is both a cognitive skill and an innate ability, and an interpreting program could only do so much in enlarging student's memory capacity. Both *stress tolerance* and *fast learning curve* are personality traits that would be difficult to teach, so if students are emotionally resilient and intellectually advantaged, they would be more likely to succeed in the training program. As for *professional knowledge in a particular field*, interpreters commented that this is usually gained and accumulated during work, so this may not necessarily be something that needs to be taught in the program or possessed prior to admission.

Therefore, ideally, prerequisites that are "un-teachable" and "important" should be incorporated into the selection criteria, namely "language proficiency" (*mother tongue proficiency* and *foreign language proficiency*) and, more broadly speaking, "idiosyncratic traits" (*memory capacity, stress tolerance,* and *fast learning curve*). This confirms with the growing number of suggestions to incorporate personality or affective criteria into the screening process (Timarová & Ungoed-Thomas, 2009). Exactly how this should be done reliably and validly remains to be solved.

### *Limitations and Future Research*

One of the limitations of this research is the insufficiency of granularity and clarity of the definition of aptitudes, which in turn confused some participants. They were unable to differentiate between certain aptitudes, leading to muddled results. In addition, most of these aptitudes were long-identified prerequisites, making it difficult for participants to categorically decide that any one is of lesser importance. Without normal distributions in most of the ratings, the statistical power could be undermined. Furthermore, individual interviews would possibly generate more detailed and in-depth feedback.

However, this study has still identified several elements that could be incorporated into future questionnaire design, namely *common sense, logical thinking, curiosity,* and *desire to communicate. Language proficiency* and *logical thinking* has also been singled out as "definite musts" in interpreters, so trainers could further explore ways to identify these qualities in admission tests to recruit suitable students for training.

### *Conclusion*

This survey on interpreter aptitudes revealed how established conference interpreters in Taiwan look at the necessary aptitudes they should possess. Interpreters verified the importance of the aptitudes that have been identified in previous research. Furthermore, interpreters prioritized these aptitudes to shed light on the aptitudes that need to be tested during admission tests, namely *language proficiency* and *logical thinking*. The interview that followed explored interpreters' views on requisite aptitudes, and additional aptitudes were added to the existing list, especially ones pertaining to personality.

The survey results show that *language proficiency* is still the most important aptitude, confirming the findings of past literature. During the interview, interpreters reaffirmed this perception, because the two most important aptitudes in the skills category—*comprehension of source language* and *speed of comprehension*—are fundamentally the manifestation of *language proficiency*. Neither *general knowledge of the world* nor *professional knowledge in a particular field* is as important as *common sense*, which was identified by those interviewed as an extension of *logical thinking*. Being able to think logically can enhance *memory capacity* and improve comprehension and delivery. Although skills are important, interpreters believe that these can be trained and improved. Interpreters rated personality traits aptitudes to be quite important (see Table 10), but they also pointed out that *curiosity* and

having the *desire to communicate* are extremely important, as these qualities can be determinative of whether or not an interpreter would enjoy his or her job and provide professional service.

# Notes

1. The Graduate Institute of Translation and Interpretation Studies (now the Graduate Institute of Cross Cultural Studies) of Fu Jen Catholic University was founded in 1988, and was the first of its kind in Taiwan.

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# Appendix

**口譯員潛質問卷調查**

**第一部分：個人資料**

1. 請問您的性別？

　　○ 女性
　　○ 男性

2. 請問您在哪一年出生？（如：1970）

　　_____

3. 請問您從事口譯工作已幾年？（如：6）

　　_____

4. 除了中文以外，請問您的工作語言中，最常使用的是哪一種？

　　○ 英語
　　○ 日語
　　○ 韓語
　　○ 其他歐語（如法文、西班牙文）
　　○ 其他語言

5. 請問您是否曾經在翻譯相關研究所接受過一年以上的正式口譯訓練？

　　○ 是
　　○ 否

6. 請問您是否曾教過會議口譯？

　　○ 是
　　○ 否

7. 若上題您回答「是」，請問您的教學資歷有多少年？

　　_____

8. 請問您現在是否有在教授會議口譯？

　　○ 是
　　○ 否

**第二部分：潛質與能力**

9. 以下潛質與「知識 (knowledge)」有關。請就每一項潛質的重要性，點
　 選最符合您看法的選項。

|  | 完全不重要 | 不太重要 | 有些重要 | 相當重要 | 非常重要 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. 母語能力（Mother tongue proficiency） | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 2. 外語能力（Foreign language proficiency） | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 3. 一般知識（General knowledge of the world） | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 4. 某一領域的專業知識<br>（Professional knowledge in a particular field） | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

10. 對一名尚未接受訓練的口譯學生而言，若他想成為專業會議口譯員，
　　上述四項潛質的重要程度為何？請您依重要程度將這四項潛 質「排
　　序」，1 是最重要，4 是最不重要。(請勿給予相同名次)

|  | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. 母語能力 (Mother tongue proficiency) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 2. 外語能力 (Foreign language proficiency) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 3. 一般知識 (General knowledge of the world) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 4. 某一領域的專業知識<br>(Professional knowledge in a particular field) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

11. 除了上述四種知識面的潛質，您認為是否有其他「知識面」的潛質也
　　很重要？

　　_____

　　_____

12. 以下潛質與「技巧（skill）」有關。請就每一項潛質的重要性，點選最符合您看法的選項。

|  | 完全不重要 | 不太重要 | 有些重要 | 相當重要 | 非常重要 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. 原文理解力，如分析與組織能力 (Comprehension of source language, ex. analytic and synthetic skills) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 2. 理解速度 (Speed of comprehension) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 3. 公眾演說技巧 (Public speaking skills) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 4. 譯文產出速度 (Speed of production of target language) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 5. 記憶力 (Memory capacity) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 6. 分神多工能力 (Multitasking) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

13. 對一名尚未接受訓練的口譯學生而言，若他想成為專業會議口譯員，上述六項潛質的重要程度為何？請您依重要程度將這六項潛 質「排序」，1 是最重要，6 是最不重要。（請勿給予相同名次）

|  | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. 原文理解力，如分析與組織能力 (Comprehension of source language, ex. analytic and synthetic skills) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 2. 理解速度 (Speed of comprehension) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 3. 公眾演說技巧 (Public speaking skills) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 4. 譯文產出速度 (Speed of production of target language) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 5. 記憶力 (Memory capacity) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 6. 分神多工能力 (Multitasking) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

14. 除了上述六種技巧面的潛質，您認為是否有其他「技巧面」的潛質也很重要？

_____

_____

15. 以下潛質與「個人特質（personality traits）」有關。請就每一項潛質的重要性，點選最符合您看法的選項。

|  | 完全不重要 | 不太重要 | 有些重要 | 相當重要 | 非常重要 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. 抗壓性 (Stress tolerance) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 2. 心智耐力 (Mental stamina) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 3. 學習力強（Fast learning curve） | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

16. 對一名尚未接受訓練的口譯學生而言，若他想成為專業會議口譯員，上述三項潛質的重要程度為何？請您依重要程度將這三項潛質「排序」，1 是最重要，3 是最不重要。（請勿給予相同名次）

|  | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. 抗壓性 (Stress tolerance) | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 2. 心智耐力 (Mental stamina) | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 3. 學習力強（Fast learning curve） | ○ | ○ | ○ |

17. 除了上述三種技個人特質面的潛質，您認為是否有其他「個人特質」面的潛質也很重要？

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18. 既然上述潛質屬於一種預先具備的能力，訓練與教學通常可以激發這些潛質，增進學生的能力。學生在翻譯相關研究所接受至少兩年的會議口譯訓練之後，下列能力可以獲得多少進步？

|  | 沒有進步 | 極少進步 | 些許進步 | 不少進步 | 極大進步 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. 母語能力 (Mother tongue proficiency) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 2. 外語能力 (Foreign language proficiency) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 3. 一般知識 (General knowledge of the world) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 4. 某一領域的專業知識 (Professional knowledge of the world) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 5. 原文理解力，如分析與組織能力 (Comprehension of source language, ex. analytic and synthetic skills) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

6. 理解速度 (Speed of comprehension) ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
7. 公眾演說技巧 (Public speaking skills) ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
8. 譯文產出速度 (Speed of production of target language) ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
9. 記憶力 (Memory capacity) ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
10. 分神多工能力 (Multitasking) ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
11. 抗壓性 (Stress tolerance) ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
12. 心智耐力 (Mental stamina) ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
13. 學習力（Fast learning curve） ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

19. 本問卷是本研究的第一階段，第二階段希望能針對口譯員的潛質，進一步訪問現職會議口譯員的看法。若您願意在六月中下旬接 受本人的訪問，請留下您的聯絡方式（如電子郵件），本人會再與您聯繫。謝謝。

本問卷到此結束，非常感謝您撥冗填答。謝謝！