English Studies at NBU, 2026
Vol. 12, Issue 1, pp. 150-172
https://doi.org/10.33919/esnbu.26.1.10

pISSN 2367-5705
eISSN 2367-8704
www.esnbu.org

REMOTE INTERPRETING AS PART OF INTERPRETER TRAINING AT SLOVAK UNIVERSITIES

Andrej Birčák

Constantine the Philosopher University, Nitra, Slovakia

Abstract

Remote interpreting experienced a global surge during the COVID-19 pandemic due to the restrictions that prohibited face-to-face meetings. Although pandemic measures have since been lifted, remote interpreting has remained a relevant and deliberately chosen modality rather than merely an emergency solution. Given its strengthened position on the market, this study examines how translation and interpreting programs at Slovak universities prepare future interpreters for remote interpreting. The data were collected through four focus group interviews and three individual interviews with a total of fifteen university teachers of interpreting courses across all five Slovak universities offering translation and interpreting programs. A thematic analysis of the interviews reveals a lack of systematic approach to remote interpreting training. Remote interpreting is addressed theoretically at two universities and practiced at one, but in each case only superficially, usually as a broader package of interpreting modalities or as a space for experimentation. At the same time, the participants agree that dedicated remote training would benefit students. The findings also outline ways to integrate remote interpreting into existing curricula and identify key challenges, such as the insufficient number of interpreting courses and limited technological resources. Understanding how remote interpreting is currently incorporated into interpreter training in Slovakia can support future improvements to better align education with market needs.

Keywords: remote interpreting, interpreter training, university curriculum, teacher, Slovakia

Article history:

Received: *20 December 2025*
Reviewed: *10 January 2026*
Accepted: *17 April 2026*
Published: *20 June 2026*

Copyright © 2026 Andrej Birčák

This is an Open Access article published and distributed under the terms of the CC BY 4.0 International License which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Citation: Birčák, A. (2026). Remote interpreting as Part of Interpreter Training at Slovak Universities. *English Studies at NBU, 12*(1), 150-172. https://doi.org/10.33919/esnbu.26.1.10

Andrej Birčák is a third-year PhD candidate of Translation Studies at Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Slovakia, where he also earned BA and MA degrees in the language combination Slovak – English. His primary research area is remote interpreting and its aspects in Slovakia. He has published four papers revolving around remote interpreting, exploring the different points of view of freelance interpreters, language service providers, and university teachers of interpreting courses.

E-mail: andrej.bircak@ukf.sk https://orcid.org/0009-0001-9359-0446

Remote interpreting (RI) is a type of interpreting of both spoken and signed languages in which the interpreter is located in a different geographical position from the rest of the participants (Spinolo, 2022). AIIC (2025) defines RI as a specific type of distance interpreting, the difference being that in RI, the interpreter is isolated from all other participants, and in distance interpreting, the interpreter is co-located with at least one participant, while another is not physically present. For the purposes of this article, the term remote interpreting (RI) will be used as the overarching hypernym to encompass both remote and distance modalities, prioritizing the shared communicative challenges of physical separation. De Boe (2023) suggests that RI is not simply a logistical change when compared to on-site interpreting, but rather a transformation that alters the basis of interpreter-mediated communication.

Today, RI is a relevant form of interpreting. While RI has been slowly gaining popularity ever since its introduction in the 1970s, the COVID-19 pandemic caused the wide-spread adoption of this modality (Hickey & Hynes, 2023). The implementation was facilitated through internet and videoconferencing technologies (Šveda & Poláček, 2025) thanks to the relentless technological turn (Colman, 2025; Štefková & Krajčovič, 2025). During the height of the pandemic, 95% of all interpreting contracts were carried out remotely and RI remained relevant even after the lift of the restrictions (Hickey & Hynes, 2023). In Slovakia, numerous public institutions had to adopt RI as a result of the pandemic (Štefková & Krajčovič, 2025). The previous research (Birčák, 2024; 2025a) found that 55% of Slovak interpreters (freelancers) and 66% of Slovak language service providers (agencies offering translation and interpreting services) do provide RI services. Another survey for Slovak interpreters by Velčeková (2024) revealed that before the pandemic, only 1.6% of interpreters worked mainly remotely, while after the pandemic, this number rose to 27.4%. As Hickey & Hynes (2023) point out, the interpreting landscape no longer resembles that of the pre-pandemic era.

Šveda & Poláček (2025) commented that the pandemic and the emergence of AI-based tools caused significant changes both in the content and delivery of interpreter training. Due to the emergence and significance of RI, this article explores whether the universities in Slovakia preparing the future interpreters reflected this market change. In Slovakia, interpreting is studied together with translation in a joint program and cannot be studied separately. The point of interest will be the form and quantity of RI training

across the 5 universities in 5 study programs on master's level. Four of these programs are focused on translation and interpreting: Comenius University in Bratislava, Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Matej Bel University, and University of Prešov. The fifth program is philological – English Language in European Institutions and Economy – offered at the Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice. Additionally, possible ways of implementing RI into interpreter training will be discussed.

By understanding the current situation, it is possible to identify both good and bad practices in the training and suggest improvements, should the situation demand it. Adjusting the training and adapting to the needs of the market can involve unique cognitive and technical skills, reduce cognitive load through preparation, and keep interpreter training programs competitive and up to date, which makes the students better prepared for the real interpreting contracts once they finish their studies, therefore improving the experience of all involved parties, e.g. interpreters, clients, language service providers etc.

RI as a Part of University Training

Based on the changes in the market, it is natural to think about the future interpreters and their training, and about the ways how RI should or could be a part of the training. Szabó (2020) argues that the training should be adapted to the market trends if the students want to succeed. Ziegler & Gigliobianco (2018) suggested already in 2018 that interpreters have to be prepared for RI during their training. Hlavac (2013) pointed out that the training models have been shaped by the norms of face-to-face communication, which can result in unpreparedness of future interpreters for the specifics of online communication. Mahyub Rayaa & Martin (2022) claim that remote simultaneous interpreting is the future of the profession, and therefore the students should be prepared for it. The findings from the Elis Survey (2025) point out that the implementation of technology is consistently higher in universities belonging to the EMT network, with the exception of RI.

The shift to RI, the emergence of remote simultaneous interpreting platforms, and the presence of AI tools put the traditional training models into question (Šveda & Poláček, 2025; Colman, 2025). The Directorate-General for Logistics and Interpretation for Conferences of the European Parliament (2023) also suggests that students should be taught to work with new technologies and platforms for remote simultaneous

interpreting. Similarly, the Quality Assurance Standards by the EMCI consortium state that students should be exposed to new technologies and that lectures should include technology-mediated work scenarios (Donovan & Manzoni, 2024). The encouragement to learn new technologies is not surprising, as the European Union institutions rely on RI, to varying degrees (Colman, 2025). A confirmation of the importance of technological competences can also be found in Braun's (2014) study, which showed that interpreters who had undergone RI training not only improved the quality of their interpreting, but also reported lower levels of stress and cognitive load. Wren (2018) argues that in RI training, familiarising students with the specific interpreting settings is more important than introducing them to the technology, because experienced interpreters tend to struggle more than novices to adapt to RI conditions.

When it comes to the previous initiatives to include RI in the training, Furtado (2015) mentions that a course unit by the name "Teleconferencing and Remote Interpreting" was integrated into the training in Portugal as early as in the academic year 2007/2008. Donovan & Manzoni (2024) highlight that RI is already present in training at various institutions around the world, such as in Glendon college in Canada, Geneva University, or Lomé University in Togo, and the authors conclude that RI is being taught at many universities, if not in the form of a regular course, then at least in the form of additional lectures.

While international research has focused on how technology-mediated interpreting can be integrated into interpreter training through simulations, platform-based practice, and blended pedagogical models (e.g. Sandrelli, 2015; Wren, 2018; Davitti & Braun, 2020; Fantinuoli, 2023; Colman, 2025), much of this work assumes conditions to introduce dedicated courses, specialised infrastructure, or flexible curricula as models for best practice. In comparison, relatively little is known about how RI is treated in smaller educational contexts typical by joint translation-interpreting programmes and limited institutional resources. This study addressed that gap by examining how Slovak universities handle the integration of RI within the existing institutional limits.

Djovčoš et al. (2023) suggest that RI will need to be implemented into the training in Slovakia, since it requires specific set of skills which warrant a distinct didactic approach (Šveda & Djovčoš, 2021). In the Slovak context, a survey for interpreters by Velčeková (2024) shows that 59.2% of Slovak university students were introduced to the

theory of RI during the lectures or seminars, even though the answers were rather contradictory and even some classmates chose contradicting answers, which was probably caused by the different set of studied languages, or, as the author suggests, the coverage of RI was only on a surface level, and therefore some of the students forgot about it. The survey (Velčeková, 2024) also shows that 52.1% of students were introduced to videoconferencing platforms during their lessons. Lastly, 73.3% of students believe that including more RI-related lectures or seminars would improve their performance and 67.6% think the current training for RI is not sufficient (Velčeková, 2024). Štefková & Krajčovič (2025) point out that in the context of Slovak public services, the use of RI is limited and fragmented and it lacks the training standards. Additionally, RI has not been yet systematically implemented into the interpreter training for public service settings and previous efforts have been largely ad-hoc, short-term, and project-based (Štefková & Krajčovič, 2025).

Methodology

There is a consensus among the literature that including RI training in the curricula is beneficial for the students, as it prepares them for the real-life contracts and enables them to better develop other skills. This article therefore explores the position of RI in the interpreter training in Slovakia. The aim is to identify whether Slovak universities offer training for RI and to what extent, as well as to create suggestions on how to improve the position of RI in the training or how to implement it from the ground-up. The approval of an ethical commission was not necessary for this kind of research.

To accomplish the goal, qualitative data were gathered, as they provide direct look on the interpreting training process. Convenience sampling was used for the selection of participants, as the choice of participants was intentional. The target group were university teachers who teach interpreting courses at Slovak universities. The list of all courses offered within the university could be found on their respective websites. The lists also included the names and email addresses of the teachers for the corresponding courses. For the purposes of this research, a database of teachers for each university was created and 50 teachers were subsequently invited to participate in the research via mail. No remuneration or other benefits were offered for participation.

To gather data, four online semi-structured focus group interviews and three online individual interviews were conducted with a total of 15 teachers of interpreting

courses (they will be referred to as participant 1 – 15 (P1 – P15)) working at all five Slovak universities where translation and interpreting courses are being taught. The original research design expected five focus group interviews, one per university, but due to time constraints of some of the teachers, compromises had to be made in the form of individual interviews. Out of the 35 teachers who did not participate, 3 were willing to participate but were unable to join the interviews at a time that was convenient for the others. Two other teachers replied that they have no experience with RI and therefore will not participate in the interviews, despite being explicitly instructed in the invitation mail and the follow-up mail that this is not a requirement. The other 30 teachers have not replied.

Author of this article is affiliated with Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra and the invited participants from this institution are their colleagues. Three other participants across two different universities were already acquainted with the author of this article before the research begun.

Interviews were carried out between June 2024 and March 2025. Interviews were held for 32 to 83 minutes, with an average interview time of 48 minutes, resulting in a total of 339 minutes of recorded material. All interviews were held online via the university's internal videoconferencing platform, Zoom, or Google Meet, depending on the preferences of the participants. Within the recordings, participants orally consented to participate on the interviews as well as having them recorded and subsequently transcribed, anonymized, and analysed. The transcripts contain from 4,574 to 11,202 words per interview. The complete dataset contains 44,688 words. The transcription was done manually using Microsoft Word, since the previous attempts to use various online tools to convert speech to text were unsatisfactory, due to limitations of the tools, such as producing a high number of errors or offering only a limited amount of transcription in the free versions.

The seven transcripts were subsequently qualitatively analysed using thematic analysis of participants' responses to interview questions. The coding was done through the identification of basic units of analysis, e.g. segments of text that included information relevant to the research topic. The coding was inductive without the use of any qualitative software, and it was done on multiple levels, identifying topics, themes, and keywords (see Appendix 1 for the Interview Protocol).

Alternative approaches, such as content analysis for theme frequencies, discourse analysis for linguistic interactions, or grounded theory, could have been employed but were deemed less suitable. Thematic analysis was selected for its flexibility in handling inductive coding across the given dataset, which enables pattern identification without imposing formal structures or quantification, which aligns with the exploratory aims of mapping RI training practices.

To ensure credibility, randomly selected passages of the transcripts were compared to their corresponding recordings by the author's PhD supervisor, who was granted access to the materials for this purpose exclusively. The supervisor compared approximately 10% of the dataset and found no discrepancies. A codebook was developed as a result of the coding process.

The interview recordings, transcriptions, and codebook are stored on the author's personal computer and on an online storage in order to prevent the loss of the data in case of the hard disk failure. The access to both the computer and the online storage is exclusive to the author of this article, protected by a password.

The main research problem was to understand the position of RI in the interpreter's training at Slovak universities. Based on the emergence of RI on the market, it might be beneficial to explore whether Slovak universities adapted and started preparing students for specific modalities, such as RI. If yes, the question of quantity and methods would be the point of interest. If not, exploring the reasons and limitations could provide a deeper insight into the internal processes of the institutions. The following research questions were designed to deal with the research problem:

1) To what extent is RI implemented into the training of future interpreters at Slovak universities? If implementation is present, what forms does it take and in what scope? If RI is not implemented, what are the factors and limitations hindering its implementation?

2) What is the optimal scope and structure for the training of RI according to the participants?

The participants were also asked about the position of RI before and during the pandemic in the university context, as well as about additional aspects of RI (Topics 1, 2 and 4 in Appendix 1) but due to the scope of the answers, only findings from the post-

pandemic era will be presented in this paper (See Appendix 1 for a complete set of questions). Findings from the Topics 1 and 2 were already published in another paper (Birčák, 2025b).

Research Limitations

The study has limitations in number of participants who joined the interviews. Across all five addressed universities, a total of 50 interpreting teachers were invited to participate in the interviews. In the end, 15 of them participated across the seven interviews. A higher number of participants would provide more authentic and complex data, minimizing the potential of missing important facts and details.

Another limitation concerns the uneven distribution of collected data across the interviews, both in terms of quality and quantity, as some interviews were represented up to four participants and some were only individual interviews with one participant. The interviews with less participants lacked the possibility to further discuss the questions among participants, which resulted in shorter and less informative interviews. Moreover, certain universities were less represented by the number of participants than others, which could mean that important information regarding the practices of the institution is missing.

The third limitation is tied to the scope of the study, since the perspective is limited to interpreting teachers. The study does not take into consideration other perspectives, such as the perspectives of students, freelancers or agencies. Including these groups in the study could potentially create a more complex image about the reality of RI in today's training.

Due to the mentioned limitations, the article does not have the ambition to present absolute and complete data about RI and its integration in the interpreter training in Slovakia. Despite the limitations, the author believes that the collected data are complex enough to point towards general tendencies.

Participants

The teachers participating in the interviews had various experience both in terms of teaching and practical interpreting skills. Within the 15 participants, 3 have up to 5 years of teaching interpreting experience, 3 have up to 10 years, 3 have 10 to 15 years of experience, 1 has up to 20 years, and the other 5 have 20 or more years of experience. 8

participants interpret professionally, half of them for the European Institutions and the other half for private sector. The other 7 participants do not interpret professionally, or they do it very irregularly.

The working languages of the participants also varied. Some participants were working with more than one foreign language besides Slovak language. The following were represented: 7 participants were working with English language during the interpreting courses; 7 participants with German language; 2 participants with Russian language; 2 participants with Spanish language; 1 participant with French language. The covered languages are representative of the languages offered within the study programs; however, some languages that are offered at some of the universities are not represented in the interviews.

Regarding the engagement in interpreting research, 5 participants actively engage in interpreting research; 5 participants have different research interests, but they occasionally conduct their own research or co-author a publication focused on interpreting; the other 5 participants do not engage in interpreting research at all and have different research areas.

Results

Results of the qualitative thematical analysis of the participants' answers will be presented in the following section. The analysis covers Topic 3 from the Interview protocol (see Appendix 1). The analysis is divided into 6 themes that were identified. The order of the identified themes does not necessarily follow the order of the questions from the Interview protocol. The reason can be found in the semi-structured format of the interviews, as some participants strayed from the given question and already started covering a different theme or mentioned a completely new one that may or may not have been relevant to the study. The presented order of themes was handpicked for the best possible clarity.

The Post-pandemic Era

The post-pandemic era refers to the timeline spanning between the return to the on-site training (March 2022) to today. The main focus is on the changes in the training and the reasons for their existence, as well as the form and quantity of RI incorporated in today's training.

Theme 1: Changes in training immediately after the pandemic

This theme focuses on changes in the interpreter training after the return to on-site training. Participants generally agreed that there were no major changes immediately after the shift from distance training to on-site training. Instead, the prevailing tendency was to resume pre-pandemic teaching practices, which was a decision that five participants across three universities associated with the relief and satisfaction of being able to meet colleagues and students in person again. However, there were a couple of small adjustments. Seven participants across three universities reported continued use of digital platforms such as Microsoft Teams and various Moodle applications as repositories for teaching materials, including glossaries, homework or speeches.

Theme 1.1: The first appearance of RI in the on-site training

This theme deals with the first deliberate inclusion of RI in the on-site training. Participants indicated that RI first appeared primarily in theoretical and demonstrative form rather than as a systematically integrated component of the curriculum. For example, P5 started covering in theory various modes of delivery, including remote simultaneous interpreting during the classes. However, this coverage was described as a showcase rather than structured practice.

Six respondents across three universities continued with the analysis and discussion of their own professional interpreting contracts, informing students about the latest practices and explaining their nuances, which is a practice from pre-pandemic and pandemic times.

P8 explained the importance of the specifics of online communication, as they became increasingly visible during the pandemic. Therefore, P8 described using selected video materials to familiarise students with atypical speaking conditions and technical disruptions that are more common in remote settings. Although such activities were not directly framed as RI training, they reflect an emerging awareness of the demands of RI.

Theme 1.2: Hybrid classes

This theme deals with the use of hybrid classes, in which some students attended interpreting seminars on-site while others joined remotely, primarily for health reasons.

This setting is not used deliberately to practice RI, but as an emergency solution for students unable to attend classes. Participants who offered hybrid classes used Microsoft Teams and internal videoconferencing systems to connect with the students. The preference of the videoconferencing tool was based on the familiarity with the given platform from the pandemic times.

The hybrid interpreting classes were effective for the rest of the summer semester (until June 2022), while participants from three universities offered hybrid classes even until the end of the winter semester of 2022 (December 2022). All participants admitted that hybrid classes were not ideal, since it was difficult for the teacher to synchronize both groups of students. Additionally, some students struggled with poor internet connection either at home or at dorms and the presence of roommates negatively impacted their performance. Several participants also noted that some students exploited the possibility of remote participation for convenience. As a result, faculties and teachers gradually discontinued hybrid classes, and only one participant continues to offer them.

As P12 explained, "it is difficult to synchronize these students with the ones that are present in the classroom, especially during simultaneous interpreting[1]"

Theme 2: The presence of RI in training today

This theme revolves around the position of RI in the current interpreter training. Participants indicated that RI is not systematically integrated into curricula and remains a peripheral component of training. At present, four participants across two universities cover RI theoretically during introductory lectures to interpreting that are attended by all students of the program despite their language combination. In these cases, RI is addressed briefly alongside other modes of delivery. Participants admit that not enough time is dedicated to RI alone.

Regarding the practical training of RI, none of the participants cover it systematically during seminars. P6 continues to experiment with RI in the form of telephone interpreting during seminars focused on community interpreting.

[1] All excerpts from the interviews were translated from Slovak language into English by the author of this article.

Theme 3: The optimal scope of RI in training

The following theme discusses the participants' views on the appropriate scope and structure of RI training within university programmes. Participants generally agreed that theoretical aspects of RI could be covered within existing lecture-based courses, such as Methodology of translation and interpreting or Praxeology of interpreting. These courses are attended by all students of the given year despite their language combination, as these lectures are held in Slovak as a common language. Participants noted that such coverage would not be time-consuming and could be implemented within a single 90-minute lecture, as is being already done at two universities.

Regarding the practical training of RI, seven participants were unsure about how much time should be allocated to RI and preferred not to answer, because they did not want to offer a random estimate. The other eight participants agreed that a reasonable portion would be one to three 90-minute classes per semester (one semester refers to 13 classes), or alternatively offering a standalone, non-compulsory course dedicated to RI. P2, for example, proposed a gradual approach in which RI activities would first be piloted within regular seminars and later adjusted based on student feedback and consultation among teaching staff.

Theme 3.1: The specifics of RI training

This theme highlights the participants' views on the need to adapt RI training to specific language combinations and market contexts. P6 agreed that while general theoretical principles of RI could be covered uniformly, the practical training should reflect the settings in which different languages are most commonly used. For example, in Slovakia, English would be most used in conference settings, while Ukrainian language in community context due to the current geopolitical situation. In this sense, RI training is not viewed as a universal component of interpreter education but as a modality whose implementation should be shaped by contextual factors.

One participant (P6) stressed that interpreter training in Slovakia is oriented towards conference settings and topics such as international politics or sustainable development, whereas RI is frequently employed in other contexts, such as public service interpreting. Given this perspective, participants suggested that practical RI training should incorporate topics and scenarios relevant to healthcare, social services, or

community settings, especially for languages that are more likely to be used outside the conference market.

> "I can imagine that English language students would focus more on the cooperation in virtual booths or on dedicated RI videoconferencing tools. The topics covered could also lean towards the conference spectre and have a more commercial character. While in smaller languages, interpreting will most likely not happen via Kudo or Interprefy, but rather it will be a raw telephone interpreting via Messenger or Whatsapp, and the topics will lean towards the community sector" (P6).

Theme 3.2: Additional activities for RI training

This theme outlines additional activities for RI training that were suggested by the participants. The most common suggestion was the simulation of remote settings and role-playing situations, in which students would form small groups and each of them would be assigned a role, such as interpreter, client, or administrative worker. Apart from simulations, participants agreed that showcasing popular videoconferencing platforms and their features should be included in the coverage.

One participant (P10) had a more structured vision centred on simulating non-ideal working conditions commonly encountered in remote settings. These included deliberate technical disruptions, such as poor sound quality or malfunctioning equipment, as well as tasks designed to increase cognitive load by limiting breaks or introducing additional tasks.

P10 also recommended to interpret speakers that are unusual in some way, for example speakers with fast delivery or read speeches, which are more frequent in online environments. In addition, P10 suggested additional activities, such as using AI during RI, for example for subtitling, respeaking or using machine translation. Lastly, P7 suggested that professional interpreters or other teachers covering RI could be invited to provide a workshop for the students on a voluntary basis.

Taken together, these activities were framed as a way of developing students' adaptability and problem-solving strategies in technology-mediated interpreting contexts.

Theme 4: Arguments against implementing RI into the training

This theme deals with the reasons why it might be unfavourable to implement RI into the training according to the participants. While all participants except P4 agreed that covering RI would be beneficial, P1, P5 and P9 expressed concerns related to curricular priorities. These reservations did not constitute a rejection of RI as such, but rather reflected caution about introducing an additional modality into already demanding programmes.

P5 and P9 commented that the interpreting courses should prioritise on-site consecutive and simultaneous interpreting, suggesting that RI should be introduced as an extension of on-site interpreting. P1 questioned the need for extensive theoretical coverage of RI, arguing instead for a practical overview of platforms, workflows, and potential problem situations.

P4 was the only participant that would not recommend covering RI at all. This can be explained by the joint structure of translation and interpreting programmes in Slovakia, which include students with differing levels of interest in interpreting.

> "I would not burden students with RI. It is enough that they have consecutive interpreting, and even worse for them, simultaneous interpreting, where many of them are visibly uncomfortable, so I would not want to put them through additional pressure" (P4).

Theme 5: Limitations in implementing RI into the training

The following theme focuses on the structural and institutional limitations that hinder the systematic implementation of RI into training. Participants emphasised that these obstacles were not related to a lack of interest in RI, but rather to broader constraints affecting university programmes in Slovakia. P2 and P7 argued that implementing major changes can be problematic, since the accreditation commission of the Ministry of Education examines the study programs and approves them every couple of years, which includes a heavy administrative process. Similarly, introducing a brand-new course requires a lot of paperwork, according to P2 and P7.

Four participants across three universities highlighted the insufficient number of interpreting courses within existing programmes, noting that introducing RI would require reducing coverage of other modalities unless additional contact hours were made available.

Technological limitations constituted another barrier. Five participants across three universities emphasised that an investment in hardware equipment and software licenses in the interpreting laboratories should be made to allow for the training of RI and other modalities, as the existing facilities are designed primarily for on-site interpreting. P5 explained that they would need licensed versions of remote simultaneous interpreting platforms or videoconferencing platforms in general. P6 commented that innovation and acquisition of new equipment would be desirable, since 'it would be unfair to expect from the students to bring their own devices' (P6).

Considering these limitations, the integration of RI into interpreter training depends not only on pedagogical intent but also on institutional capacity and resource availability.

Theme 6: Students' initiatives

This theme highlights the students' interest and initiatives to gain exposure to RI despite its limited presence in training. According to four participants across two universities, students' initiatives are one of the more promising developments regarding RI. Some students are active within students' associations. Participants specifically mentioned the student-led association called *Sa zobuď!* (https://www.sazobud.sk) that unites the students of translation and interpreting programmes in Slovakia, organising various events, workshops, discussions, podcasts etc. Some students within this organisation voluntarily provide RI during various events, including the ones that are organised directly by the association. Remote simultaneous interpreting is the most frequent type of interpreting during these events.

Apart from gaining experience, the students are also able to fulfil their mandatory practice demanded by their university. The mandatory practice requires the students to work a certain number of hours or days translating, interpreting or both. Interpreting at

the students' events can be a part of this mandatory practice or, if in a sufficient amount, some students can fulfil their whole required practice by RI.

P11 admitted that such initiatives cannot be seen as a replacement for the university training, since interpreting at these events is on a voluntary basis.

> 'It is better than nothing. In this way, the students are compensating for what we could not deliver as teachers' (P11).

Conclusion

After the pandemic, it became clear that RI is not just an emergency solution, but rather a unique modality of interpreting that has its benefits. The emergence and presence of RI on the market was the main motivation to explore its position in the interpreter training at Slovak universities.

The central contribution of this study lies in providing insight into the institutional and pedagogical factors that shape the position of RI within the training programmes. By exploring teachers' perspectives, the study advances disciplinary understanding of how emerging interpreting modalities are viewed and incorporated into existing educational structures.

Šveda & Poláček (2025) highlight the institutional lag that is often present in the development of professional standards and terminological clarity and further comment that universities alongside professionals are often adapting to the tools only after their emergence, rather than shaping their trajectories. The answers to Research question 1 support these claims, as RI remains a peripheral component in the interpreter training at Slovak universities, with theoretical coverage being unsystematically provided at two universities and practical coverage limited to experimenting at one university. Informal discussions with the students about participants' interpreting contracts are continuing, which is beneficial for the students since the Elis Survey (2025) highlighted that students rely on their teachers for information about the industry.

The findings regarding Research question 2 reveal that there is no universal rule how to apply RI into interpreter training, and it is rather a matter of possibilities of each institution. As Štefková & Krajčovič (2025) explain, the Slovak context could benefit from

international training models, but not through direct replication, since the specifics of each institution should be considered and adjusted accordingly to its possibilities. Taken this into account, the integration of RI into training might be best incorporated through gradual approaches rather than comprehensive curricular reform. Theoretical coverage, context-sensitive practical activities, and exposure to non-ideal remote working conditions could provide students with necessary competences while remaining compatible with existing programme structures. This aligns with prior research concerning the ways how to implement RI into interpreter training (Alley, 2012; Wren, 2018; Davitti & Braun, 2020; Seeber & Fox, 2021; Alarcón-García, 2023; Colman, 2025). In the context of platforms for RI training, the Slovak authors Šveda & Djovčoš (2021) mention the platform I-nest which was developed based on the impulse of some of the teachers from Slovak universities during the pandemic, but this platform was designed to provide training for simultaneous interpreting in an online environment, and not specifically for training RI. The authors further suggest that specialised platforms like Kudo would be ideal for the training, but due to their high cost, more feasible alternatives would be popular non-specialised platforms, such as Zoom. Such low-threshold strategies may offer a realistic way for integrating RI within existing institutional constraints, providing an alternative to the specialised platforms and fully fledged RI modules that are often described as best practice in international research.

The findings primarily elaborate on existing research that has identified RI as an increasingly relevant yet unevenly integrated component of interpreter training (Seeber & Fox, 2021; Spinolo, 2022; De Boe, 2023). In line with prior studies, such as Donovan & Manzoni (2024), participants in this study acknowledged the relevance of RI and expressed general support for its implementation into training. The findings enrich the literature by demonstrating that the limited presence of RI in training at Slovak universities characterised by joint translation-interpreting programmes is less a result of pedagogical resistance than of structural constraints, such as rigid accreditation frameworks, limited contact hours, and inadequate hardware and software in the interpreting laboratories. Unlike specialised interpreting programmes, the Slovak model must balance the needs of translation-focused students, creating unique curricular demands. Therefore, strategies developed for high-specialisation contexts may not be viable in joint-degree programmes unless they are adapted accordingly. The findings are

further in line with the observations by Šveda & Djovčoš (2018) and Colman (2025), who note that interpreter training programmes often struggle to accommodate new competences within existing curricula. In this view, the Slovak case illustrates a tension between evolving professional practices and comparatively slow-moving educational practices. The findings complement existing research by foregrounding feasibility and institutional capacity as central variables in the integration process of technology-mediated interpreting into university programmes.

The study also reveals context-specific dynamics, such as the impact of joint translation and interpreting programmes on curricular design. Concerns about student workload and uneven commitment to interpreting partly explain why some participants were cautious about introducing an additional modality. Other explanations for the peripheral position of RI within the programmes, such as lack of awareness or undervaluation of the modality, were not strongly supported by the data, since participants demonstrated familiarity with RI and its challenges. The findings also add a contextual dimension to international discussions on RI training by demonstrating how programme structure and market size shape decisions about technological integration.

The study also shows that RI is already entering training in informal ways, through students' own initiatives. The presence of student-led RI practices, particularly within voluntary associations, indicates a demand for structured exposure to RI and suggests that students are aware of its growing relevance. While such initiatives cannot replace formal training, they underscore the gap between market realities and institutional provision.

Methodologically, the focus groups and individual interviews provided interactional data and enabled the identification of shared positions among interpreter teachers. However, the findings are limited by the scope of the data. A higher number of participants would provide a more complex image about the position of RI, especially within institutions that were represented only by a single participant. Additionally, the national focus on Slovakia limits the transferability of the findings to other institutional or market conditions. And while the findings are grounded in the Slovak context, they may be informative for other countries with comparable programme structure, market sizes, and limited institutional resources.

Future research could build on this study by conducting comparative analyses across national contexts or evaluating the effectiveness of specific RI training implementations in similarly structured programmes. Despite its limitations, the study suggests that RI has the potential to become a more structured component of interpreter training at Slovak universities, provided that its integration is aligned with institutional capacities. Such developments could contribute to better preparing future interpreters for contemporary professional realities and improving the quality of interpreting services.

References

Alarcón-García, V. (2023). Learning to Interpret and Mediate in the 1·1·2 Emergency Phone Line through Roleplay. *Bridge: Trends and Traditions in Translation and Interpreting Studies*, *4*(1), 13-36.

Alley, E. (2012). Exploring Remote Interpreting. *International Journal of Interpreter Education*, *4*(1), Article 10.

Birčák, A. (2024). Interpreters' Perception of Remote Interpreting Services in Slovakia. In E. Verebová, L. Žitňanská, A. Birčák, & A. Zahorák (Eds.), Tradition and Innovation in Translation Studies Research XII (227-256). Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra.

Birčák, A. (2025a). Language Service Providers' View of Remote Interpreting in Slovakia. In L. Žitňanská, A. Birčák, L. Kodajová, R. Chantal Čuláková & E. Perez (Eds.), Tradition and Innovation in Translation Studies Research XIII (29-48). Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra. https://ktr.ff.ukf.sk/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/tai-xiii.pdf#page=30

Birčák, A. (2025b). Remote Interpreting in the Context of University Training in Slovakia During the Covid-19 Pandemic. *Research in Language, 23*, 86-113. https://doi.org/10.18778/1731-7533.23.06

Braun, S. (2014). Comparing Traditional and Remote Interpreting in Police Settings: Quality and Impact Factors. In Viezzi, M. & Falbo, C. (Eds.), *Traduzione e interpretazione per la società e le istituzioni* (pp. 161-176). Trieste: Edizioni Università di Trieste.

Colman, A. (2025). GenAI for self-directed individual and collaborative learning in the training of conference interpreters for the European Union institutions. *L10N Journal, 1*(4), 21-44.

Davitti, E., & Braun, S. (2020). Analysing Interactional Phenomena in Video Remote Interpreting in Collaborative Settings: Implications for Interpreter Education. *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer, 14*(3), 279-302.

De Boe, E., Vranjes, J., & Salaets, H. (Eds.). (2023). *Interactional Dynamics in Remote Interpreting: Micro-Analytical Approaches*. Routledge.

Directorate-General for Logistics and Interpretation for Conferences. (2023). *Memorandum of Understanding on the training of conference interpreters for the academic years 2023-2025* [White paper]. European Parliament. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/236214/memorandum.pdf

Djovčoš, M., Klabal, O., & Šveda, P. (Eds.). (2023). *Training Interpreters: Old and new challenges*. Bridge. https://www.bridge.ff.ukf.sk/index.php/bridge/issue/view/8

Donovan, C., & Manzoni, C. (2024). Remote interpreting: a game-changer for interpreters? *The Interpreters' Newsletter Special Issue, 29*, 1-29.

ELIS. (2025, March 18). *Trends, Expectations and Concerns of the European Language Industry* [Conference presentation]. https://elis-survey.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/ELIS-2025_Results.pdf

Fantinuoli, C. (2023). Towards AI-enhanced computer-assisted interpreting. In G. Corpas Pastor & B. Defrancq (Eds.), *Interpreting Technologies: Current and Future Trends* (pp. 46-71). John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/ivitra.37.03fan

Furtado, M. A. C. M. (2015). Beyond the Meeting Room - On-Site vs. Remote Interpreting: A Set of Experimental Studies. *Polissema - Revista de Letras do ISCAP, 1*(15), 10-131. https://doi.org/10.34630/POLISSEMA.V0I15.2983

Hickey, S., & Hynes, R. (2023). *The 2023 Nimdzi Interpreting Index: The Ranking of the Top 34 Largest Interpreting Service Providers*. Nimdzi. https://www.nimdzi.com/2023-interpreting-index

Hlavac, J. (2013). Should Interpreters be Trained and Tested in Telephone and Video-Link Interpreting? Responses from Practitioners and Examiners. *International Journal of Interpreter Education, 5*(1), 34-50.

International Association of Conference Interpreters. (2025). *AIIC Guidelines on Distance Interpreting* [White paper]. International Association of Conference Interpreters. https://members.aiic.org/document/13494/AIIC%20Guidelines%20on%20DI.pdf

Mahyub R. B., & Martin, A. (2022) Remote Simultaneous Interpreting: perceptions, practices and developments. *The Interpreters' Newsletter, 27*, 21-42. https://doi.org/10.13137/2421-714X/34390

Sandrelli, A. (2015). Becoming an interpreter: The role of computer technology. *MonTI, 7*, 111-138.

Seeber, K. G., & Fox, B. (2021) Distance conference interpreting. In M. Albl-Mikasa & E. Tiselius (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Conference Interpreting* (pp. 491-507). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429297878

Spinolo, N. (2022). Remote interpreting. *Encyclopedia of Translation and Interpreting (ENTI)*, 1-27. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6370665

Szabó, C. (2020). Fit-for-Market Specialised Translator and Interpreter Training: A Hungarian Example. In C. Szabó, R. Besznyák, & M. Fischer (Eds.), *Fit-For-Market Translator and Interpreter Training in a Digital Age* (pp. 3-24). Vernon Press.

Štefková, M., & Krajčovič, M. (2025). Remote Interpreting: How Can It Change the World of Public Service Interpreting in Slovakia? *L10N Journal, 1*(4), 110-127.

Šveda, P., & Djovčoš, M. (2018). Súčasnosť a perspektívy výučby tlmočenia na Slovensku. In P. Šveda, & M. Djovčoš (Eds.), Didaktika prekladu a tlmočenia na Slovensku (pp. 123–152). Comenius University in Bratislava.

Šveda, P., & Djovčoš, M. (2021). *Translation and Interpreting Training in Slovakia*. Stimul.

Šveda, P., & Poláček, I. (2025). Interpreter Training in the Age of AI. *L10N Journal, 1*(4), 5-20.

Velčeková, K. (2024). *Development of remote interpreting during and after the COVID-19 pandemic* [Master's thesis, Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica]. CRZP. https://opac.crzp.sk/?fn=detailBiblioFormChildKKPCJ&sid=F0082B7A009D1614B0C218B883AC&seo=CRZP-detail-kniha

Wren, Ch. (2018). Training for Remote Interpreting [Master's thesis, University of Geneva]. https://archive-ouverte.unige.ch/unige:131146

Ziegler, K., & Gigliobianco, S. (2018). Present? Remote? Remotely present! New technological approaches to remote simultaneous conference interpreting. In C. Fantinuoli (Ed.), *Interpreting and technology* (pp. 119-139). Language Science Press. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1493299

Reviewers:
1. Anonymous
2. Anonymous

Handling Editor:
Stan Bogdanov, PhD
New Bulgarian University

Appendix 1

Protocol of semi-structured interviews with university teachers of interpreting courses

Topics and questions (Translated from Slovak into English)

Introduction

Interviewer introduces themselves and explains the aim of the interview, the procedure, data collection, and expectations about the interviews and the handling of data.

Introduction of the participants

- How much experience do you have with professional interpreting?
- How long have you been a university teacher?
- What courses (interpreting or otherwise) do you teach?
- What are your working languages?
- Are you an active interpreter yourself?
- Do you engage in research related to interpreting?

Topic 1: Pre-pandemic era

- **Question 1**: Describe how the interpreting courses were carried out before the COVID-19 pandemic (class activities, structure of the seminars, evaluation methods etc.).
- **Question 2**: Was remote interpreting being taught during the classes before the pandemic in any way?
- **Question 3**: If yes, how exactly was it being taught? (methods, activities, theory)
- **Question 4**: If yes, how much space was dedicated to remote interpreting?
- **Question 5**: If yes, what platforms were being used and how were they financed?
- **Question 6**: If not, what were the reasons?

Topic 2: Pandemic era

- **Question 1**: What were the main differences in teaching interpreting classes after the pandemic started?
- **Question 2**: What platforms have you been using during this era?
- **Question 3**: What were the advantages and disadvantages of remote education?
- **Question 4**: What were the reactions of the students on the remote education?
- **Question 5**: Have you noticed the rise of remote interpreting during this era?
- **Question 6**: If yes, have you reflected on this in any way during the interpreting classes?

Topic 3: Post-pandemic era

- **Question 1**: What has changed after the return to on-site training compared to the pre-pandemic era?
- **Question 2**: Is RI being taught in interpreting seminars today?
- **Question 3**: If yes, how exactly is it being taught?
- **Question 4**: If yes, what software tools are being used and how are they financed?
- **Question 5**: If not, do you think it would be beneficial for the students?
- **Question 6**: If not, how would you incorporate RI into training?
- **Question 7**: How much space should be dedicated to the training of RI?

Topic 4: Additional aspects of remote interpreting

- **Question 1**: Do you think RI requires new or different competences compared to on-site interpreting?
- **Question 2**: If yes, what are they and how are they important?
- **Question 3**: If not, what do you think are the biggest differences between RI and on-site interpreting?

Thank you and end of the interview.