

Perez, E. – Hodáková, S. (2021). Translator and interpreter training during the COVID-19 pandemic: Procedural, technical and psychosocial factors in remote training. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning E*, 8, 276 – 312. <https://doi.org/10.51287/cttle20219>

**TRANSLATOR AND  
INTERPRETER TRAINING  
DURING THE COVID-19 PAN-  
DEMIC: PROCEDURAL, TECH-  
NICAL AND PSYCHOSOCIAL  
FACTORS IN REMOTE  
TRAINING**

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## **Abstract**

The main focus of the study lies on the challenges in translation and interpreting university training in the changed environment of the COVID-19 pandemic. It reflects the significant changes in training and learning in Slovakia after shifting from campus-based training to remote training, investigating the key factors influencing the learning process of students from their perspective. Based on the results of a focus group discussion with students, their qualitative analysis and quantitative verification via an online survey at all Slovak universities that provide translation and interpreting study programme, three types of factor were identified. The first category – procedural factors – relates to the training process itself; technical factors relate to technical aspects and limitations influencing the education of students; and psychosocial factors reflect intra- and interpersonal aspects affecting students in either a positive or negative way. Investigation of these factors provides useful findings on the learning experience of students during the current crisis.

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Key words: university training, translation and interpreting, COVID-19, learning experience, remote training, students' perspective

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Similar to other fields of human activity, the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-1 has hugely influenced university training across the globe. In the case of translation and interpreting (TI) programmes providing in-person training, challenges have arisen in attempting to ensure full-value, interactive training, preparing students for successful performance in the professional market in future. What should not be overlooked is that the learning experience of students has also faced many challenges and adapting to the different contexts and processes may not always be smooth. In our study we therefore explore the changed training and learning environment from the point of view of TI students. Our aim was to identify, classify and analyse the factors that influence students' performance.

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This study reports our findings from a focus group discussion with TI students and its qualitative analysis, which was consequently verified quantitatively via a survey with TI programmes students in Slovakia. Based on the results, three categories of factors influencing the students' learning process were identified – procedural, technical and psychosocial. Their analysis reveals the impact of the crisis on students, but also specifies challenges to be tackled by universities and training institutes as well as teachers. After providing a theoretical background and description of the methodology of our research, we in detail analyse the three categories of factors and evaluate individual aspects reflected upon by students. The overall interpretation offers further implications of the findings as well as their possible application in improvement of remote training and the learning environment provided in the conclusions.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

The main focus of our study lies on challenges in remote training and learning, approached as remote education in either synchronous or asynchronous forms. Brereton (2020) applies the term *emergency*

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*remote training*, which reflects the urgency, not-always systematic preparation and improvisation specific to the current situation (Hodges et. al, 2020). Although often used as synonymous, *online training* on the contrary offers education specifically designed to be provided and delivered online (Brereton 2020:1).

According to a briefing by the European University Association on European higher education during the COVID-19 crisis, the majority of European universities closed their campuses in March 2020, 95% switching to remote training throughout the whole institution (2020: 3). This change has significantly affected life in academia in all its aspects and strongly affected the training and learning experiences of university students. Doolan et. al reflected several challenges from students' perspective, with rather alarming findings on difficulties with financial costs for more than half of questioned university students, half citing inadequate internet connections, and two thirds reflecting on problematic access to study materials and resources (2020:14). Similar to findings reflecting increased stress and workload in adapting to the current situation for university staff and teachers (Hodges et al. 2020), Doolan et. al also refer to increased stress, anxiety and decreasing motivation of

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university students (2020:12). They also note that 78.3% of their respondents have been living with their parents since the pandemic started, which is almost double the pre-pandemic rate (2020:9). The question arises how this aspect has influenced the learning outcomes of students. Furthermore, participants of the research tended to report feeling that their academic performance after moving to remote forms of training after the COVID-19 outbreak worsened (Doolan, 2020:12).

Focusing particularly on students of TI programmes, our research was designed to reflect the learning realities in the context of the key competence areas to be developed in their training (Gile 1992, 1995; Kiraly 2013; EMT 2017). These also place emphasis on human behavioural traits and interpersonal skills which are in general seen as important in future successful career performance (Barrick & Mount 1991, Mulder 2014) and which should thus be an integral element in university training. The importance of integrating the enhancement of more specific personal and interpersonal skills significant in the training of translators and interpreters is also clearly elaborated in several competence models, mainly in relation to stress, planning, time management and coping with workload (EMT, 2017), motivation (Göpferich,

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2009) as well as professional responsibility (Király, 2013). We believe this became specifically challenging when transferring to remote training of future translators and interpreters.

### **3. METHODOLOGY AND MATERIALS**

The methodology used for this study consisted of quantitative-qualitative research, focusing on the key factors influencing the training and learning outcomes of TI students. The main focus lies on trainees' perspective which was provided via semi-structured interviews in a focus group discussion and followed by the collection of data through an anonymised online survey conducted with students of all Slovak universities providing training for future translators and interpreters.

#### **3.1. Research design**

In early 2021 we conducted an empirical, exploratory, quantitative-qualitative study focused on determinants of the training process in the field of

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translation and interpreting studies in a changed environment during the COVID-19 pandemic. We focused on the students' perspective, with the aim to **identify, classify and analyse factors influencing the remote training (and learning) of students of translation and interpreting programmes in Slovakia**. The first phase of the research consisted of a semi-structured interview in the form of a focus group with five students of the master's study programme at the Faculty of Arts, Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra (FA CPU). Based on the findings from qualitative analysis we identify key factors that influence remote training and learning according to students. In the second phase we follow up the qualitative findings from the interview with a questionnaire to be used in a subsequent quantitative analysis. First, it was piloted with 10 students at FA CPU and then it was distributed online to all universities in Slovakia that provide translation and interpreting study programmes. Currently, 208 questionnaires have been filled out. The following analysis will focus on the individual factors of TI training identified in the responses by students.

### **3.2. Research sample and interview procedure**



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Five students of the master's translation and interpreting study programmes at FA CPU in Nitra participated in the online focus group interview – 4 females and 1 male. The selection of subjects was intentional and stratified in order to ensure the most reliable representation of the reference population. Sex of the participants and the language combinations studied by the individual subjects was proportional to the representation among TI students at FA CPU in Nitra. As one of the aims of the research was for subjects to compare individual aspects of remote training with in-person training, students in the later stage of their studies who could evaluate practical in-person training from before the pandemic had to be selected. The group interview lasted 90 minutes. It took place online via the Zoom platform, in a semi-structured form, i.e. the moderator had prepared basic topics and questions beforehand, but adjusted their order and added more questions in the course of the interview as was needed. Subsequently, an anonymous transcript of the interview was elaborated to serve as the basis for further analysis and survey design.

### **3.3. Research sample and survey design**

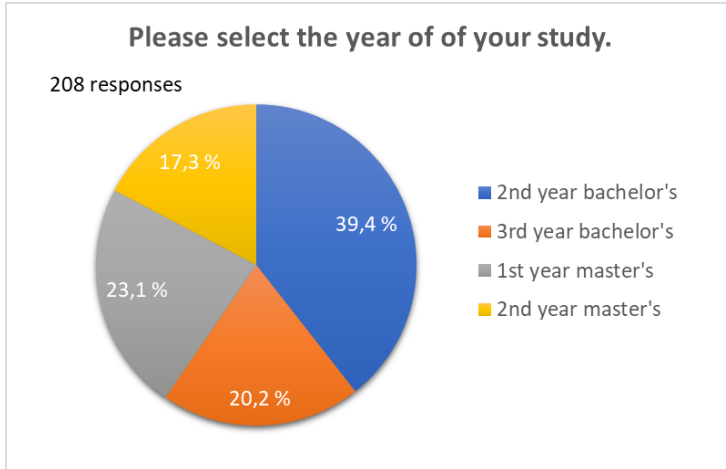
In the following phase an online questionnaire using findings from the group interview was designed. It

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consisted of closed questions (multiple choice and Likert scales) and open questions providing an opportunity to freely express one's attitudes and opinions. Thus, the questionnaire provided not only quantitative but also qualitative data that strengthened our qualitative analysis of the individual factors. The questionnaire was distributed online to all universities in Slovakia providing TI study programmes. It was aimed at at least second-year students of bachelor study programmes, as the aim was to compare in-person and remote forms of study, i.e. the respondents had to have attended at least one semester of their study in-person. To avoid undesirable distortion of data, the students did not state which university they attend. Currently, the research sample consists of 208 students with 59.6% attending a bachelor level study programme and 40.4% attending a master's level study programme. More detailed distribution can be seen in the chart below.

Figure 1. Research sample of the questionnaire by year and level of study

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#### **4. IDENTIFICATION OF KEY FACTORS INFLUENCING THE LEARNING PROCESS AND FINDINGS**

Using a qualitative analysis of data from the interview and the qualitative part of the online questionnaire, three main areas of factors that influence TI training from students' point of view were identified as follows:

- Procedural factors, relating to the education process and its individual stages; the training process and its

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individual remote learning forms (synchronous, asynchronous); and phases and elements in training, subject material, relayed knowledge, skills and competencies. Based on the responses, the most significant factors are reflected in connection to the number of assignments and responsibilities, group sizes, activity and interactivity of the classes (active participation, feedback, discussions, confrontation), criteria of evaluation (requirements, expectations, demands), self-evaluation, contact with practice and profession (grasp of market demands, contact with experts), students' self-study and final theses.

- Technical factors, relating to the education process and its individual stages, all technical aspects influencing the education process of TI students (resources, communication methods, technical devices, etc.). Most significant factors reflected by students are technical issues and limitations, usage of online communication platforms and access to resources (libraries, reading rooms).
- Psychosocial, relating to intra- and interpersonal aspects that influence the process of remote learning of TI students – either positively or negatively. These are for students concentration, communication, social support, stress management and motivation.

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The individual factors overlap and influence each other, and they are multidimensional. As such, it may be more accurate to consider these factors as primarily procedural, primarily technical, and primarily psychosocial.

#### **4.1. Procedural factors**

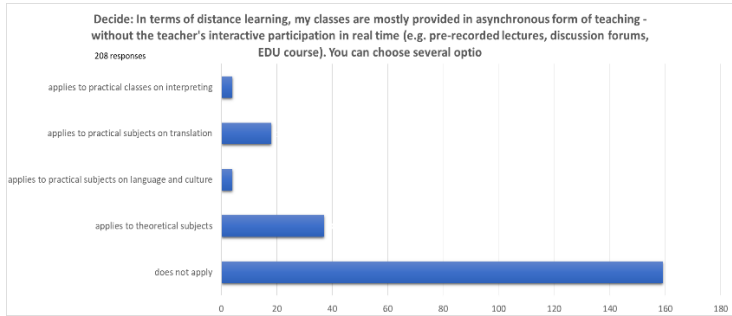
In the survey students stated that the vast majority of classes (76.4%) were provided in a synchronous form, i.e. made use of one of the online communication platforms to create virtual classrooms.<sup>1</sup> The asynchronous form (i.e. without interactive participation of the teacher) was uncommon and it was mostly used in the case of pre-recorded lectures on theory (17.8%) and rarely for practical seminars aimed at translation (8.7%) and interpreting (1.9%). In other words, practical training of translation and interpreting skills took place largely in the synchronous form of online classes. Compared to the situation during the first wave, where more classes took an asynchronous form, the current approach is valued positively.

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<sup>1</sup> The data focus on the so-called second wave of the pandemic, i.e. beginning with the winter semester 2020/21. Asynchronous form was much more common during the first wave in the summer semester 2019/20.

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Figure 2. Form of provided training and education



The factor of *assignments and responsibilities* was evaluated by students in a direct comparison between translation and interpreting seminars. Respondents stated that in terms of translation seminars, they felt there was an increase in the number of responsibilities, i.e. they were given more assignments on a weekly basis compared to in-person training. For instance, if they did not manage to finish a translation or its analysis in a virtual class, they were told to finish the task as a homework assignment to be submitted online, whereas in regular in-person attendance they would have finished the task together in the following class. Many students felt they were given more assignments because they were at home and thus were expected to have more time. Similarly,

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many stated that there was an increase in the number of presentation assignments, and they believed that was the case because teachers considered it to be a highly appropriate form of remote training. Since the students participating were mainly in the later stages of their studies, it is difficult to say whether the increased responsibilities were the result of the changed form of training or of a natural increase in study demands in higher grades.

As for interpreting seminars, students especially appreciated improvements in teaching compared to the so-called first wave of the pandemic, when most of the interpreting training took an asynchronous form. Students stated that the synchronous form provides a better sense of authenticity. Students also naturally associate interpreting with stress which was reflected in their responses as well. They stated they experienced less stress when interpreting online due to increased anonymity. They were, however, keenly aware of the fact that experiencing stress constitutes a necessary part of training. They considered the number of responsibilities and assignments as lesser when compared to in-person training. They believed this was mainly due to teachers being “lenient” and understanding in regard to the students’ situation and technical capabilities. However, students often

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lacked more detailed feedback on their performance by teachers. It is likely that in the situation of interpreting training that barely corresponds with the reality of interpreting booths, students experience higher uncertainty, meaning targeted feedback and evaluation is all the more important.

*Group size* is a factor students believe to affect remote learning much more than in-person learning, since in large groups they often had to keep their cameras and microphones and cameras turned off because of technical limitations. Thus the dynamics of classes, interactive possibilities, discussions as well as ability to focus were thus all significantly altered. Communication was more constrained, with a lack of spontaneity and non-verbal feedback (expressions of interest or lack thereof, comprehension/incomprehension, etc.). As has already been stated, students were often uncertain about their performance and they would have benefited from more detailed feedback for which there was not enough time in the case of larger groups.

*Activity and interactivity* in classes is a factor connected with the management of groups and group sizes. There are certain inherent communication limits to what can be achieved with online platforms and



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they are even more challenging in case students need to have their cameras and microphones turned off in case of technical issues. Of course, there still are other possibilities for interactions (chat, working in groups, etc.), but these do not fully replace a spontaneous discussion, the opportunity to interrupt each other, answer impulsively, activities aimed at fast reaction times, etc. Students also stated that when presenting an assigned topic, they lacked visual contact with their audience, non-verbal feedback during their presentations, the option to directly address someone, etc. However, the increased anonymity and social distance also represented an advantage to a small group of more introverted or anxious students, since they did not experience as much nervousness, stage fright and they felt more motivated to participate in in-class activities, as stated in their responses.

Students commented on *criteria of evaluation* (requirements, expectations, and demands) in comparison between translation and interpreting. Students stated that the requirements and demands of teachers had increased when it comes to translation seminars, that teachers evaluated them more “strictly” and demanded more requirements be fulfilled. Some students even expressed that while the requirements had gone up, they did not – considering the time and

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energy they invested – receive what they would consider sufficient feedback on their performance or evaluation of their translations by teachers. On the other hand, according to the respondents, requirements and demands of teachers have decreased regarding interpreting performance, or rather teachers were more understanding as to technical issues and other circumstances that could have negatively affected interpreting performance of students. However, students also often lacked more detailed feedback on their performance.

Students often recognised the importance of *self-evaluation* when it came to interpreting seminars. They believed it to be important to be able to analyse their own performance (e.g. by using a retrospective protocol or by analysing recordings of their speech). How much students were led to self-evaluate, however, largely depended on the teacher. On the other hand, when it came to translation seminars, students considered teacher evaluation (e.g. being told whether they chose the proper equivalent, term, style, etc.) to be more important, or rather did not see self-evaluation as particularly helpful.

As for the relaying of knowledge and competencies, students highlighted especially easier *contact with*

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*practice and profession.* During remote learning, their programmes used more opportunities to invite foreign guests and renowned local experts. Thus students had more chances to participate in discussions with experts from practice, attend online conferences and lectures, workshops, and webinars than during in-person learning.

*Students' self-study* went practically without any constraints; students worked from home, submitted their translations and assignments, received feedback from their tutor. They also had opportunities to work on subtitling projects, internships, etc. In the case of interpreting, opportunities to gain practical experience were significantly limited and even if students had an opportunity, e.g. when their university organised a conference, many did not take it out of fear they were not sufficiently prepared or competent.

*Final theses* were significantly reflected upon by final year MA and BA students. In this regard, they saw library closures as the biggest issue. During the winter semester 2020/21, libraries in Slovakia were fully closed; later the option to reserve publications was offered. Study halls were closed fully. Thus, students had two problems – on one hand, they did not have access to some sources, on the other they lacked

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the ability to work in a study hall where they could better concentrate on their work. They did, however, comment positively on working with their thesis supervisors, most of whom were willing to communicate not only via email, but also via video conferences and calls.

## **4.2. Technical factors**

The standpoints of respondents towards technical factors should be interpreted in connection to the overall technical expertise of students. The vast majority of students participating in our research consider themselves to be sufficiently technically skilled to handle remote learning (93.7% students fully or mostly agree with the statement). Most also agree they have sufficient knowledge of technical options and resources in terms of remote learning (88.2% fully or mostly agree). The majority consider support on their university's part to be sufficient as well (79.8% fully or mostly agree).

Figure 3. Self-evaluation of technical expertise of students

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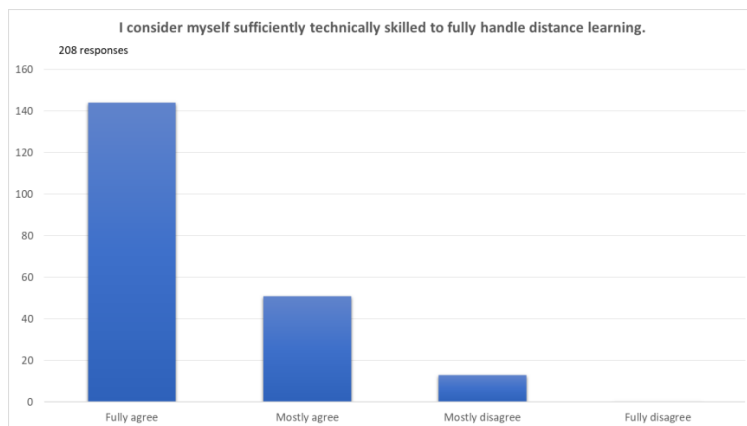
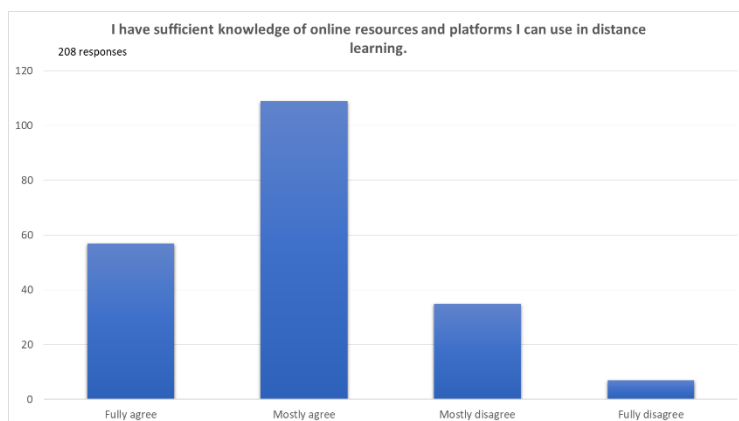
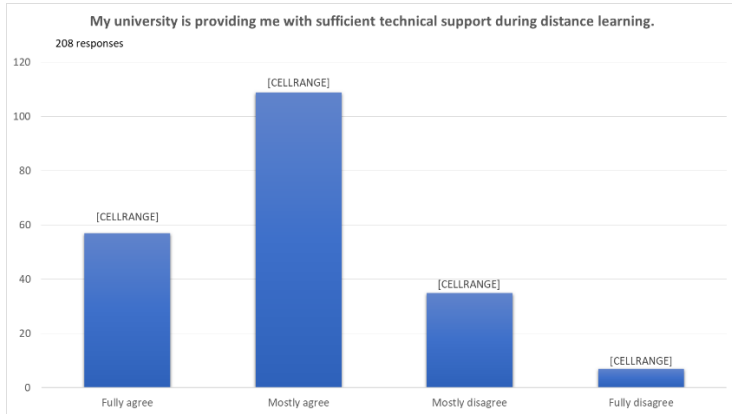


Figure 4. Self-evaluation of use of online resources and platforms by students



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Figure 5. Evaluation of technical support from university



*Technical issues and limitations* were mostly referred to as a result of the problematic internet connection students had in some locations, as well as a lack of sufficient technical equipment – camera, headphones, microphone (particularly at the beginning of remote learning). Unstable internet connection as well as issues with technical equipment were exceptionally stressful for students, who felt angry at having their work interrupted and missing parts of their classes, and felt they were not always able to receive a proper education. Students claimed, however, that over time they had solved many of these issues and learned to better manage such situations and not

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succumb to negative emotions. Many expressed that teachers' understanding of their situation and better set up of some processes (e.g. making use of alternative ways of communication) had helped them.

As has been stated already, most classes were synchronous, especially using various *online communication platforms*. Overall, students were satisfied with the form of teaching and choice of freely available platforms (e.g. Zoom, Discord) and they appreciated being afforded the opportunity of interpreting training. As a negative they perceived the fact that when a larger number of participants was connected, they had to keep their cameras turned off due to technical limitations and could not see each other, which greatly influenced the education process. Some students also minded when multiple communication platforms were used for different subjects in one semester as they found it confusing.

Respondents also perceived constrained *access to resources*, due to the (partial) closure of libraries and the full closure of study halls as problematic, since resources and publications they needed for their studies or research activities were not always available online, but only in libraries. They did, however, appreciate the willingness of some teachers to share

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some resources, e.g. in the form of scanned pages or shared materials. Many students in our research claim to use study rooms in libraries, because they allow them to better concentrate and afford them a more peaceful environment for working. They have lost this option during the pandemic and perceived it as a negative.

### **4.3. Psychosocial factors**

Some of the factors falling under this category can be seen as predominantly *intrapersonal* (e.g. personal development, focus and concentration, motivation), some as predominantly *interpersonal* (e.g. communication, social contacts), and others as a *combination* of the two (e.g. handling of stress often requires resources from both sides – personal and social). The individual factors overlap and significantly influence each other.

*Concentration* on the study subject is a factor that appears to be significantly affected by technical aspects. Most students considered it difficult to maintain sufficient concentration for the entire duration of online classes (generally 80-90 minutes), mostly due to the already mentioned factors – turned off webcams and resulting anonymity, disruptive stimuli



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from the household, decreased interactivity and thus the increased monologic nature of the presented material, issues with internet connection and technical devices, overall decreased energy, easier escape from uncomfortable situations via e.g. turning off of webcams, but for some also increased fatigue and an overall feeling of apathy.

Another important aspect is *communication* and interaction. As we have already mentioned in connection with technical factors, the group dynamics in virtual classes have undergone major changes. This limitedness in communication has often also been carried over to private interactions with family and friends. Some respondents stated that on one hand they missed social contact and conversation, on the other hand they have got so used to their new circumstances that they did not actively seek out conversation and communication.

Despite limited interactions, students stated that between themselves as well as teachers there was a strong *sense of solidarity and empathy, mutual understanding and support*, especially in regard to study and technical issues. Many, particularly the more extrovert students stated they missed their social life, student events outside of school, or “just

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normal chit chat in the hallway about the previous weekend”. The more social students perceive *social contact and activities* as a substantial resource in handling demanding situations, and in times of remote learning they are deprived of it.

The factor of *handling of stress* had two dimensions in the students’ responses. Some students claimed to experience less stress during remote learning due to the increased anonymity, larger social distance (remoteness), and better opportunities to “escape” an uncomfortable situation, e.g. by turning off their webcam. Students suffering from social phobia (social anxiety disorder) and stage fright belong to the group of introverts. These students simultaneously felt more motivated and participated in classes more actively than during in-person attendance. On the other hand, the other group of students experienced more stress, especially due to having more responsibilities, effective organisation of their time being more necessary, overall uncertainty, technical issues, etc. Increased stress was also experienced by students who had not sufficiently mastered relaxation and coping strategies. With some students, the increased stress led to resignation and apathy, i.e. lowered motivation to actively participate in the educational process.

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As we have implied already, the *motivation* factor also had two dimensions in the students' responses. One group of students experienced lower motivation, in particular due to their work environment. Monotonous conditions for work, rest, hobbies, leisure time (for the most part everything takes place in one room), as well as more anonymity in virtual classes (especially if the cameras are turned off), physical absence of the teacher and other students, smaller interactivity in class, and insufficient social support all led to a decrease in motivation. The other group of students, on the other hand, had no issue maintaining sufficient motivation and appreciated that since they did not have to, for instance, commute to school, they could instead use the saved time to efficiently organise their duties throughout the day.

Students uniformly stated that in times of crisis, it is of particular importance to work on one's personality in order to effectively adapt to a new situation. As for personal growth, development and improvement of attributes, abilities and skills, many students stated that the crisis had helped them improve some respects they consider to be important for their future private and work life, e.g. increased independence, better time management, self-discipline, overall

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increased maturity, etc. There was, however, a small group of students who perceived the need for personal growth, but they perceived the situation as too demanding to be able to make use of it in a productive and constructive manner. Instead, they were succumbing to stagnation and/or anxious or depressive states.

## **5. INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Based on the results of our analysis, we sorted the individual determinants into three main groups: procedural, technical and psychosocial. Regarding procedural factors, many students pointed out the difference between translation and interpreting training, especially in terms of the number of assignments and of the requirements of teachers in order to pass the class. Students felt their workload was increased in translation seminars when compared to in-person learning, that the criteria for passing the individual translation subjects were stricter, and that they did not consider the feedback they received on their performance to be sufficient. They believed it was due to teachers assuming that since they did not need to commute nor did they have other extracurricular activities, they had more time for schoolwork. As for

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the lacking feedback, students presumed that teachers had more work during remote training and had to adapt to new circumstances. By contrast, students stated that teachers were more lenient with both the number of assignments and requirements in interpreting seminars, and they believed teachers understood that many hurdles were objective in nature (e.g. technical issues, health issues). However, students often lacked more detailed feedback on their performance in this case as well. Students viewed positively the expanded options of contact with experts from academia as well as practice that were opened up by an increase in the number of online lectures, webinars, and conferences. They would welcome this option in the future as well.

In terms of technical factors, the majority of students considered themselves sufficiently technically competent to handle remote training, but they were annoyed with disturbances to the smooth course of classes due to technical failures, especially in the beginning. Later they got used to the occasional issues and learned to solve them at least partially via alternative means. Some students disliked different platforms being used for different classes. They perceived the need to manage multiple links, passwords and logins as an additional burden. They did, however,

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appreciate teachers' attempts to choose a platform that would best fit the relayed material.

Psychosocial factors are among the most subjective aspects of remote learning. Handling and experiencing different types of load, the ability to maintain sufficient focus and attention in class, and the need for social contact are all strongly dependent on aspects such as personality and character traits and cognitive abilities. Thus, in all of these aspects in our research we could observe conflicting tendencies. Some students who are more introverted, or suffer from stage fright or social anxiety, perceived remote forms of training as less demanding than in-person attendance. They benefited from the feeling of greater anonymity and social distance. On the other hand, more social, extrovert students found it more difficult to handle the absence of social contact and direct interaction. Similarly, in regard to motivation and attitude to work, one group of students stated they felt demotivated, even apathetic, resigned, especially due to the monotony of the environment in which they worked. By contrast, another group felt more motivated due to the ability to better organise their time, since they did not need to commute to university nor did they have other extracurricular activities during the day. Likewise, when it comes to personal development,

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one group has used the crisis situation as an opportunity to work on their personality, abilities and skills they consider useful for their future professional as well as private life. By contrast, some students were aware of the need to improve themselves, but have been unable to reach constructive solutions due to excessive demands and succumbed to negative thoughts, apathy.

To conclude, we may state that the qualitative analysis of the various factors influencing the course and outcomes of the education of future translators and interpreters can be seen as exceptionally useful, as it offers a deeper probe into the individual specificities and differences that must be taken into account when possible. Teachers may benefit from the deeper insight into students' situations this analysis brings forth and adapt teaching processes accordingly. We are aware that teachers do not always have the ability to change processes and circumstances as they may be out of their control (e.g. student group sizes, technical issues, etc.). We do, however, believe it is important to know the factors that either positively or negatively influence students or account for them in teaching as much as possible. We are also aware of the limits of research such as this and that it will always be influenced by the subjectivity of the

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individual answers and its limited potential for generalisation of results. Nevertheless, we are convinced that the findings of our research imply important aspects and tendencies that one must focus on in the process of (not only TI) training.

## **6. CONCLUSIONS**

Much like other fields impacted by the pandemic, university education of future translators and interpreters in remote form is affected by a variety of factors. Some have a negative influence, others positive, and some are seen as an advantage by some students and as a disadvantage by others. The aim of the qualitative analysis within our research has been to identify, classify and analyse factors influencing remote training of students of translation and interpreting on the basis of findings from a group interview and from qualitative answers in an online questionnaire aimed at students of the TI field at Slovak universities.

Three categories of factors were identified. The category of procedural factors refers to students' perception of the training process in its changed form, and the impact of training strategies and constrained access to resources on their performance in both translation and interpreting modules. Several differences were recognised, especially in terms of the criteria of



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evaluation and the evaluation process itself, as well as the dynamics of classes. A positive response in this category was identified in increased opportunities for extracurricular activities such as invited talks by professionals, workshops and academic events, which became more available to students. The category of technical factors revealed the extent of limitations stemming from transferring to remote training and learning. Besides technical issues with devices and internet connections, a negative response was reflected with regard to the limited access to resources in libraries as well as the impact of restrained access to university facilities. Of significant value were the findings categorised as psychosocial factors, revealing how students coped with the changed learning environment in terms of stress, motivation and concentration, as well as insight into their personal perception of the current situation.

The identified factors and their analysis have the potential to help understand the specifics of the changed training and learning realities of TI students transferring from in-person to remote forms of training. Results reveal the challenges students are facing, not only in terms of their training and learning experience, but also as individuals in constrained social environments. They also point out space for

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improvement in terms of university support and design of training processes and strategies in individual modules during the current crisis situation.

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