

## 豪クイーンズランド大学 MAJIT (日本語通訳翻訳修士課程)

学生と実務経験者の視点から

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*This report describes my observations on the Master of Arts in Japanese Interpreting and Translation (MAJIT) program at the University of Queensland in Australia from the viewpoint of a student, as well as someone who has worked as an interpreter/translator and taught interpreting skills for decades. In this report I will introduce the courses in the MAJIT program and compare them with commercial translation/interpreting (TI) training schools in Japan, which are largely dedicated to training of practical skills. I will then delineate my experiences and observations, and offer some thoughts on the program after finishing the first semester of the two-year program in June 2014. My particular focus is on how courses that do not involve direct training of practical TI skills support overall TI training and how mixing native English and Japanese speakers in class helps the learning process of the students of both languages.*

### 1. Introduction

The Master of Arts in Japanese Interpreting and Translation (MAJIT) Program at the University of Queensland is “one of the only two programs in the world ranked by the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) Survey of Conference Interpreter Training Courses as meeting all or most of AIIC criteria.” This report details my observations of the program after finishing the first semester in June as a student.

I had two objectives when enrolling in MAJIT after working as an interpreter and translator and teaching at an interpreter training school in Japan. My first objective was to examine and experience first-hand the curriculum for a translation and interpreting (TI) program taught at an academic institution, and compare it with those offered by commercial TI training schools in Japan. My chief interest was to find out how courses in the curriculum that do not directly teach TI skills benefit students who are just starting TI training, and how they might benefit those who had already worked as a professional interpreter/translator. Of

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the eight MAJIT students enrolled in 2014, two including me had prior TI experience. The other objective was to observe the benefit of undertaking a program like this outside Japan, with a particular focus on how native English language students interact with native Japanese language students in class. The MAJIT class of 2014 is comprised of six Japanese students, one American student, and one Australian student. There were three other Australians and two other Japanese students who were enrolled in the program as part-time students in the first semester.

## 2. The curriculum for MAJIT

Figure 1 shows the course list for the MAJIT program. All MAJIT students are required to take the same courses, except for the research-related course in the first semester. For this requirement, they can choose between General Research Methods (LTCS6000) and Research in Translation (LTCS7020). They are required to take eight courses under Part A in the first year to earn 16 credits and to take five courses under Part B in the second year to earn another 16 -- a total of 32 credits.

Figure 1. MAJIT Course List

Part A

#32 consisting of -

#2 from -

Course Code	Units	Course Title
<u>LTCS6000</u>	2	General Research Methods
<u>LTCS7020</u>	2	Research in Translation

and #14 for -

Course Code	Units	Course Title
<u>JAPN7110</u>	2	Public Speaking
<u>JAPN7120</u>	2	Advanced Textual Skills
<u>JAPN7130</u>	2	Applied Translation
<u>JAPN7140</u>	2	Consecutive Interpreting into English
<u>JAPN7150</u>	2	Consecutive Interpreting into Japanese
<u>JAPN7160</u>	2	Advanced Translation I
<u>JAPN7170</u>	2	Theory of Translation

Part B

and #16 for -

Course Code	Units	Course Title
<u>JAPN7200</u>	2	Live Interpreting Forum I
<u>JAPN7210</u>	2	Technical Translation I
<u>JAPN7220</u>	6	Conference Interpreting
<u>JAPN7230</u>	2	Live Interpreting Forum II
<u>JAPN7260</u>	4	Advanced/Technical Translation II

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The courses in the first semester highlight the differences between university TI programs and those offered by commercial TI training schools. Three of the four courses offered in the first semester of MAJIT do not involve actual TI training, and instead are designed for teaching students ancillary skills and knowledge that would be useful for interpreters/translators. Applied Translation (JAPN7130) is the only course involving training in practical TI skills.

### 3. Observations of individual courses in the first semester

#### 3.1 Public Speaking (JAPN7110)

The students delivered prepared 3-minute speeches in both English and Japanese in class for a variety of settings, including; ceremonies to open or close an event, the dedication of a new building, presenting or receiving an award or a gift, and marking a milestone of sort. Other speeches tested the students' ability to persuade or entertain the audience.

This course helped students overcome the stage fright they might feel when speaking before a large audience. The course profile notes that the class provides insight into what language interpreters can anticipate speakers using. The profile also points out that “emphasis will be placed on the content, structure, delivery, pronunciation and diction, register, lexicon and style of speeches.”

In-class speeches were not for assessment, however, the students were evaluated on 5-minute oral presentations in English and Japanese in which students summarized assigned articles in the two languages, and three-minute impromptu speeches in both languages with five minutes to prepare. Not finishing a speech or an oral presentation within a set, narrow, time frame was punished by point deductions although such strict time management does not seem necessary in actual TI practice.

Assessing impromptu speeches for the exam after the students had practiced prepared speeches in class seemed to represent a gap between the course content and the exam, since

the class covered approaches to preparing and delivering a speech appropriate for the given setting, and not how to organize and deliver a speech on the spot.

### 3.2 Advanced Textual Skills (JAPN7120)

This course is designed to strengthen speed-reading and summary writing skills. It goes without saying that speed-reading is useful for both interpreters and translators for assignment preparation under time constraints. Interpreters often have to skim through hundreds of pages of documents while translators need to read a large volume of references for research to extract the main idea and logic.

Students were split into two classes as they are required to take the course in their non-native language. In the English speed reading class, taught by an Australian instructor, the students were introduced to speed-reading tools, including a reading guide such as a pen and a metronome to keep the pace of reading, and a variety of techniques such as no regression, fewer and shorter eye fixations, and soft focus. They were encouraged to adopt whatever techniques suited their own reading habits. Their reading speed was recorded throughout the course to monitor progress in time and comprehension. All students saw improvement in both criteria.

### 3.3 Applied Translation (JAPN7130)

This course was the only one that directly dealt with TI skills. Japanese-native speakers were enrolled in the English to Japanese translation class, taught by a Japanese instructor, while English-native speakers were enrolled in the Japanese to English translation class taught by an Australian instructor. The direction of translation is set because the students are required to translate into their native language in the final exam of the MAJIT program. The exam follows the format of NAATI (National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters) at Conference Interpreter and Advanced Translator level.

I believe that having students of both English and Japanese in the same class would be more stimulating and productive. Apparently this was not the case because translators in Australia -- and the US and Europe, for that matter -- are expected to work into their native language to maintain best-practice standards.

Since English education in Japan is predominantly based on American English, the distinctive terminology of Australian English as well as unfamiliarity with the country's politics, culture and other aspects posed a challenge to the Japanese students. Given the cultural differences between the two countries, the students had to think about how much background information they should give to get the meaning across to the target reader without changing the tone. The choice between domestication and foreignization (Venuti, 2008), dynamic/formal equivalence (Nida, 1964a) and deforming tendencies in translation

such as clarification and expansion (Berman, 1985b/2004) came up as recurring issues in class.

### 3.4 Research in Translation (LCTS7020)

This course is not specifically designed for the MAJIT program and is open to students in other programs, but it is one of the electives required for completing MAJIT. All of this year's MAJIT students opted for this course rather than General Research Methods (LTCS6000). It seems that MAJIT included this course because a theory component is one of the AIIC criteria for Best Practice Recommendations. The program also requires a more in-depth translation theory course in the second semester.

A barrage of the names of theorists and theories and all the exotic terms in translation studies initially overwhelmed many of the students, including me. By the end of the semester and after studying the whole textbook<sup>1</sup>, however, most students appeared to have seen the pieces of the puzzle of translation studies coming together. I also began to see a certain link between the theories and the decisions I have been making while translating and interpreting. I believe that further comparison between theory and practice would be beneficial to my TI career.

I might add that the course could have been better organized even though it was a brand new course. It was team-taught by five different instructors, who each seemed to have their own standards, goals, objectives, and expectations.

## 4. Conclusion

The three non-TI courses in the first semester were all new to me, with each posing unique challenges. As a person who has been engaged in TI for nearly 30 years, the Applied Textual Skills course was enlightening in that it reminded me that even experienced interpreters and translators can learn to read faster and understand better. This is even more true for those who are just starting TI training.

Public speaking required a change in my attitude as an interpreter who has been always told to keep a low profile. The course provided effective training for writing a good speech for a given occasion and delivering it in an appropriate tone and manner. For beginners in TI training, the course was useful for memorizing set phrases in English and Japanese that suit a variety of occasions, and for practicing delivering a speech in front of an audience.

The Research in Translation class provided me with a logical explanation for why I make certain decisions in the process of translation. This will help me in teaching as it illuminated some of the TI processes and strategies adopted by myself and other individual translators and interpreters. Going back and forth between theory and practice by comparing the translator's decision making processes against theories would be beneficial in refining

‘the laws of translation’ (Toury 1995).

Despite the benefits of these courses, however, given the limited duration of the program, more emphasis on introductory TI training in the first semester would have greatly helped students who had no prior TI experience. I might underline this point because students only study consecutive interpreting in the second semester, yet are required to do simultaneous interpreting shortly after the beginning of the second year in the Live Interpreting Forum. In the Forum, which is open to the public, the students interpret a presentation by a guest speaker for an audience mostly made up of the first-year MAJIT students. The instructor monitors their performances and gives them feedback in a review session immediately following the Forum.

The native English speaking students in class made a great contribution by providing productive input and insights. They helped correct misunderstandings and misperceptions that native Japanese speakers had regarding English usage. They also introduced Japanese students to terminology peculiar to Australian English and pointed to its difference from American English.

In fact, this mixing of Japanese and non-Japanese students in class benefited everyone. In public speaking, some students exchanged native checks of their speech scripts, and corrected each other’s mistakes in pronunciation, intonation, and tone in their non-native language during voluntary rehearsal sessions.

Finally, living with an Australian family has been helping me deepen my understanding of the way people live in this country -- their interests in life, their way of thinking, and their food and entertainment. These are things one could never learn in Japan from books or any other research resources.

I will conclude this report with the hope that I will have the opportunity to update it as the program progresses.

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**About the Author**

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**Notes**

1. *Introducing Translation Studies* (Munday 2012)

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