

Interpreting Warrant Officer System and Defense Interpreting in Korea* **

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1. Introduction

A number of factors are involved in the process of interpreting, such as language, interpreting technique, psychology and background information. Various factors affect the performance of an interpreter, but in defense interpreting an interpreter carries more burden. Sanchez said,

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An account of interpreting during the Cold War must explain all the constraints (cultural, ideological and physical) that influence the work of interpreters in diplomatic settings or when they convened for negotiations in political or military settings, in a climate marked by tension, distrust and verbal confrontation as occurred at Panmunjom (2010: 231).

Thus, in a particularly tense environment such as defense interpreting, the stress heightens because “language is used to ‘invent’ the enemy” (Wright, 1997: 215). On top of that, the military contents that defense interpreters deliver are neither open to the public nor accessible to researchers due to their classified information status. For such reasons, research in defense interpreting was scarce despite its importance on many levels. In an attempt to shed light on this matter, this paper analyzes the following:

- 1) Specific cases of difficulties in actual defense interpreting and interpreting training
- 2) Appropriate type of defense interpreters apt for overcoming these difficulties
- 3) Possible policies and educational support measures to nurture competent interpreters on a sustainable basis.

It should be noted that limitations exist in this study because certain details of education are part of military secrets, such as the curriculum of Korea Defense Language Institute (KDLI). The Internet website of the U.S. Defense Language Institute(www.dliflc.edu) is benchmarked in this paper for its education and curriculum.

2. Historical Background of Korea's Defense Interpreting

2.1. Korea's First Defense Interpreters

On August 15, 1945, Japan collapsed after World War II and the U.S. troops were deployed in the southern part of the Korean peninsula and communication was at stake between the U.S. and the Korean armies. When the Republic of Korea gained independence, communication became more critical and the Korean Army adopted the LO (Liaison Officer) system, which was later on changed to IO (Interpreting Officer) system. IOs were English-speaking officers during the Korean War and they played a crucial role in Korea-US joint operations. Afterwards, IOs were not officially commissioned but the army mobilized officers with good command of English, background of schooling abroad, or schooling by private institutions entrusted by the army. The Defense Ministry, Joint Chief of Staff, the headquarters of each Army, together with the military or operation commands used them during regular Korea-US joint training.

The period of recruitment of IOs varies according to the army. The Air Force has been selecting IOs from its Academy since 1997 and now the Air Force Academy and the Air Force Operation Command is jointly recruiting IOs. Those who applied for IOs while they were schooling in renowned universities home or abroad can serve as IOs in the army. Most of them, however, quit the army after the compulsory service period of 3 years. The IOs from military academies routinely avoid to serve as IOs since it is not considered as an enhancement opportunity for their military career. The result is that veteran IOs are not easily nurtured.

2.2. IO training in the Army

At present, defense interpreter training is undertaken by the Korea Defense Language Institute (KDLI), an affiliate of Joint Forces Military University.

KDLI was set up in December, 2012, and joint interpreting training started here for the army, the navy and the air force. Previously, each entity conducted its own interpreting training. A systemic education was not offered in terms of content and technique. A former IO says, “Only when they were deployed in actual duty and suffered from some bitter misinterpreting experiences, they were in for real defense interpreting.” (Lee 2011: 11). It was because the training was conducted in the form of on-the-job training (OJT). Now, as all the English and interpreting education is being incorporated into KDLI, a system for a structured, long-term training is under construction.

Then, why was the past training so ineffective? The same ex-IO says, “Accuracy and speed are very important in defense interpreting because they are directly related to the military operation of a troop and even a country.” (Lee 2011: 12) Based on this remark, the efficiency of defense can be analyzed in two aspects: content and technique. To improve accuracy, training in content is necessary. To enhance speed, training in technique is required.

2.2.1. Aspect of Content

In terms of content, past defense interpreting training put emphasis on memorizing the technical terms and specific operations, but context and content should be learned through actual interpreting trials and errors. Even after the training course, it was not easy to conduct interpreting on site. Furthermore, “the peculiarity of the military dealing with a lot of national secrets and classified information, made it hard to get and apply them to interpreting training (Lee 2011: 12). For the same reason, it was also difficult to obtain complete content of various operations written in general defense terms. The absence of basic background information and direction of each operation presented a challenge to the study.

2.2.2. Aspect of Interpreting Techniques

In terms of technical aspect of the training, interpreting techniques were passed down on site in a less than professional and structured manner. Senior IOs taught their juniors just by sharing their know-how. Before interpreting, professionals should gather relevant information and construct related terminology. And if the operation personnel use PowerPoint data, they should be printed out and referred to. Concentration exercise, memory span expansion and note-taking exercise were not conducted in a professional manner, either. In the past, defense interpreters had to obtain all the necessary techniques only through trials and errors. That caused a great deal of hardships to novice IOs and they desperately needed professional pedagogy on interpreting techniques and methods. All this deficiency and low efficiency sometimes resulted in misinterpreting on site. Misinterpreting cases are rarely made public due to defense secrecy, but this study introduces one case of misinterpretation which was reported by the Korean press.

2.3. A Case of Misinterpretation in Defense Interpreting

Since defense interpreting conducted in or out of the army is not open to the public, cases of misinterpreting cannot be statistically verified. But on rare occasions they are reported when the interpreting is open to the public for press conferences and the like. One such case was on August 10, 1999. John Tilelli, the Commander of the US-Korea Combined Forces at the time was reported to have said in his introductory remark through an interpreter, “the Korean peninsula is most dangerous since the Armistice Agreement signed in 1953.” Then, a controversy arose because the two countries were viewed to differ in analyzing the situation.

In the underlined part, two parts before and after the conjunction 'and' are not connected in substance. The interpreter did not clearly divide the two parts

and wrongly said, “the peninsula is most dangerous since 1953.” The correct interpreting in Korean is:

“한미 양국은 1953년 정전협상 체결 이래 어느 시기보다도 확고한 혈맹관계를 유지하고 있다. 또 한반도는 북한으로 인해 불확실하고 예측 불가능한 지역으로 남아있다”

Kwak (2007) came up with three causes that must have resulted in that kind of misinterpreting. Those are 1) lack of knowledge or information, 2) lack of vocabulary and 3) lack of experience. In the case above, we can assume that 1) or 3) must have caused the misinterpreting. The substantial and technical problems were carried from the inefficient training methods of defense interpreters in the past.

First, “lack of knowledge or information” is cited as the main cause of misinterpreting and it can easily be understood when we analyze the situation around the Commander’s remark at that time. Commander Tilelli would have spoken with military terms of Field Manual. Therefore, the interpreter should have some command of defense terms, which could have alleviated his psychological burden as well. However, in the Commander’s introductory remarks, specific military terms were not used. Nevertheless, it was misinterpreted. Thus, we cannot ascribe it to “lack of vocabulary.” This case can be ascribed to the interpreter’s carelessness about the actual situation in the peninsula. In other words, it is a case from “lack of knowledge or information.” The Commander was commenting on the Korea-US relations, particularly on the situation with North Korea. The Korea-US relations are mentioned incessantly and are also in constant change. They change little by little every now and then, and we have to cope with them as we follow their evolution. We have to reflect those sensitive changes in interpreting without resorting to past nuances of the language. Misinterpreting could result in big gaffes. Thus, the Korea-US relationship is most susceptible to misinterpreting

and it is a complex subject. In August, 1999, Korea's policy toward North Korea was to engage the North through Sunshine Policy. Therefore the expression "the most dangerous situation since the signing of the Armistice" was the opposite to the situation. If the interpreter had been familiar with the situation, he would not have made such a mistake.

The second cause was "lack of experience." It is closely related to the technical aspect of interpreting. As aforementioned in the technical aspect of interpreter training, the interpreting techniques were not systematically conducted in the past defense interpreter training. When interpreting for the Commander, if the interpreters are not familiar with the situation at the time, they could manage their tasks with more ease during consecutive interpreting than simultaneous interpreting. However, if the interpreters are not familiar with the situation, they would face difficulty in handling the situation, which could result in misinterpreting. This could lead to a nationwide controversy if revealed to the public. Therefore, interpreting techniques should be incorporated into defense interpreter training, including the ways to cope with contingencies.

2.4. Incorporated Interpreter Training by KDLI

As aforementioned, the Korean Defense Language Institute (KDLI) was set up, in part, to incorporate the defense interpreter training which was conducted separately by each army. Aside from interpreter training, KDLI is also teaching practical English for officers and non-commissioned officers from the Army, the Navy and the Air Force.

〔Table 1〕 KDLI Curriculum

classification	Content
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fostering language resources for joint operations and overseas missions - Korean language capability building for consigned foreign officers to attend the curriculum
Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Common: Above middle-level speaking ability - Interpreting course: Interpreting for protocol, briefings and meetings, plus defense translation
Period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - English: General English 4 8 12 24 weeks (optional), 8-week overseas training preparation, 12-week CO training and 24-week WO training - Second foreign languages (Chinese, Japanese, Arabic): 40 weeks - Korean course: 40 weeks
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - English and 2nd language: Korean officers - Korean course: consigned foreign soldiers
Venue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KDLI (Janghoweon, Icheon City, Kyunngi Province)

To attain the above objectives, the curriculum should teach knowledge about the army as a whole and professional techniques for interpreting protocol and military meetings. Thus, professional defense interpreters to be trained at KDLI should obtain similar capacity to that of general conference interpreters but also receive specialized education in military terminology and military jargon¹⁾.

If so, what would be the type of interpreters who could best perform the defense interpreting under military circumstances? We should compare the efficacy of freelance interpreters with a lot of experience in a variety of subjects to military in-house interpreters with less interpreting techniques and experience but whom possess more knowledge and information about the army. We will now elaborate on the most efficient type of defense interpreters.

1) Proceedings of the 2nd Seminar on Developing Defense Interpreting Education, 2014:57

3. Interpreters for Defense Interpreting

3.1. Categorizing Interpreter Types and Their Characteristics

Interpreters are categorized in many ways, according to the characteristics of interpreting jobs and interpreters' employment types. Choi (2004) categorized them into conference, escort, guide and community interpreters, while Kwak (2008) divided them into freelance and in-house interpreters according to employment types.

Interpreters can be classified into professional and ad hoc. Professionals are freelance conference interpreters and in-house interpreters employed by corporations. Ad hoc interpreters are amateurs who perform interpreting on an irregular and provisional basis as need be.

Conference interpreters are employed by conference organizers on a relatively short period and receive payment for interpreting particular conferences. In Korea, they are usually graduates of interpreting schools with professional training curriculum. They are generally superior in linguistic capabilities and interpreting techniques to in-house interpreters who are employed by organizations on a longer terms. Technical aspects of interpreters can be "interpreting speed and reflex" (Kwak, 2008:6).

In-house interpreters usually go to office every day like other office workers and get used to the terms and background information of their hiring organization. Thus, they excel in the terminology and specific information on a certain subject. They enjoy a superior position in handling the matters of their specialty.

Ad hoc interpreters are most susceptible to misinterpreting because they are summoned on an irregular basis and they are not usually ready or prepared for interpreting mission with necessary terminology and sufficient background information. When a friend or a relative of a patient happens to interpret for the patient in a hospital setting, he or she is called a "proxy interpreter."

We cannot clearly distinguish the merits and demerits of conference and in-house interpreters in the case of army interpreting. But on the probability that army in-house interpreters may also have as much linguistic talent and sense as conference interpreters, we can train defense interpreters in the army on a formal basis.

3.2. Appropriate Type for Defense Interpreter

During the past 30 years, defense interpreters have been exposed to press reports, and they were sometimes conference interpreters or ad hoc interpreters mobilized by the army. But military officers or enlisted men or even army civilian employees are more desirable for defense interpreting when they are properly trained as in-house army interpreters for the following reasons.

First, since the army should maintain confidentiality in all its operations, in-house interpreters are a safer choice in maintaining confidentiality. This is why the army cannot heavily rely on conference or ad hoc interpreters. Moreover, in-house army interpreters work in the army every day and follow relevant knowledge and information in their specialized field before interpreting military affairs. In comparison, outside interpreters may lack knowledge and information with military operations and details.

Secondly, in-house interpreters are a more economical choice since outside professional interpreters entail excessive extra budget, which cannot be covered by a regular defense budget.

The question arising here is this: Should defense interpreters be more skilled in military expertise or interpreting technique? In Korea, the same question arose when the first healthcare interpreters were trained in 2009. Which would be better: teach interpreting to nurses with medical expertise and experience or teach medical knowledge to professional interpreters? In healthcare interpreting, it turned out that professional interpreters were less willing to be trained for healthcare interpreting because hospitals are not ready

to pay them as much as conference organizers. So now, most of the trainees of healthcare interpreting are nurses who are willing to interpret patients in their hospitals. A similar conclusion can be drawn in the case of defense interpreting. In the same vein, we would rather train military personnel with linguistic capability as interpreters without entailing extra interpreting budget. In the Presidential Office and even in the Foreign Ministry, diplomats are used as interpreters rather than employing professional interpreters on need basis. It is surely more stable and economical.

Thus, the Korean army has set up the KDLI and is trying to train in-house defense interpreters and also supporting the efforts with institutional development.

4. System for In-house Defense Interpreting

4.1. Introduction of Interpreting Warrant Officer (WO) System²⁾

In order to provide stable defense interpreting, the army should first guarantee the careers of in-house defense interpreters. Officers are usually recruited for interpreting and work as such for 3 years, which is compulsory for Korean males. Most become proficient interpreters in 3 years, but many leave the army after the required period of 3 years. Career officers cannot stick to interpreting mission only out of passion for interpreting when their interpreting achievements do not help build their army career. Thus, we have to provide bigger incentives to the officers during their compulsory service period and help career officers build up their professional army career. That way, both would be willing to take the interpreting training and perform with a sense of mission. On this realistic necessity, the army adopted the “Interpreting WO Program” and it could stabilize the supply of defense interpreting

2) Introduction of Interpreting WO, ppt file, 1-9, 2016, KDLI

personnel. The interpreting warrant officers (WOs) recruited in 2013 for the first time were warrant officers and they are supposed to be lifelong career soldiers. It can be an example of policy progress.

To elaborate on the interpreting WO program, the Defense Ministry revised and announced the “Military Personnel Enforcement Ordinance” to provide interpreting and translation for WOs before the transfer of operation control to the Combined Forces Command. When the operation control is transferred, the Korean Army would take the lead in setting up operation plan and order and combined operations would necessitate real-time intelligence exchange capabilities, which would considerably change the environment of Korean Army’s duty performance. However, as pointed out earlier, the active interpreting officers have only 3 years of compulsory service period, so they leave the army when they acquire professional interpreting techniques. Thus, it is not easy to secure experienced interpreters with professional expertise. So the Defense Ministry has implemented a policy to supply and use WOs for an extended service period as interpreters and translators.

4.2 The Status of Warrant Officer

In the Korean Army, warrant officer is called *joonwie* (준위, 准尉). The rank is situated above privates and non-commissioned officer (NCO) and below commissioned officer. Their initial monthly salary is around USD 3,000 and they are supposed to retire at the age of 56. Their family can use military accommodation and welfare facilities free of charge and they can stay in the same unit for up to 10 years. These terms and conditions can enable them to devote themselves to interpreting job without concerns about their career.

Korean nationals, men and women, aged 20 to 35 can apply for WOs if they have graduated from high school and above. In the first document selection, they should present certificate of marks they obtained in one of the official English tests: above 900 (ST 160) points in the TOEIC, above 870 (ST

80) in the TEPS, above PBT 600 (CBT 250, IBT 100) in the TOEFL, or above Level 2 (90 points) in the G-TELP.

In the second appraisal conducted by the KDLI, they are tested in interpreting (30 points), translation (20 points) and English interview (20 points). In the 3rd test by the Army Headquarters, they are put to interviews in Korean (25 points), physical strength examination (5 points) and character screening (pass or fail).

After the selection process from May to September each year, the final contestants are sent to the 8-week basic military training at a military training school and 24 weeks of defense interpreting education at the KDLI. In the 12th week of the KDLI training, failed trainees proved not apt for the course are eliminated.

The first 13 graduates of the course in 2014 are deployed to the Joint Command in Seoul (1), the Special Forces Command in Seoul (1), the Navy Operation Command in Busan (1), the Overseas Headquarters in UAE (1), the USFK bases relocation project task force in Seoul (2), the Airforce Logistics Command in Daegu (2), the Second Operation Command in Daegu (1), the Missile Command in Chungju (1) and the Army Corps in three locations (3). The two WO graduate deployed to the USFK bases relocation project task force in Seoul must have replaced the in-house interpreters who were working there, thereby proving the viability of the Interpreting WO system.

4.3 KDLI's Intensive Defense Interpreting Training³⁾

KDLI's curriculum management and goals are as follows:

1. Controlled self-learning guide for practice-first intensive short-term training
2. Individual strong and weak point analysis (one-to-one feedback)

3) Intensive Training of Defense Interpreting, ppt file, 10-14, 2016, KDLI.

3. Reality-based appraisal: one-to-one oral critique according to a critique standard
4. Focus on consecutive interpreting with showing examples for simultaneous interpreting

The daily schedule of the WO trainees is as follows (Monday to Friday):

08:30~09:20	Shadow Speaking Practice	담임교관
09:30~10:50	Interpreting Class (Defense-oriented)	
11:00~15:50	Interpreting (Politics, Diplomacy, Protocol, etc.)	전담교관
16:00~17:50	Translation (Field Manuals, documents)	담임교관
18:00~19:30	Physical training and supper	
19:30~21:00	Night-time self study	담임교관

KDLI seems to consider interpreting techniques of defense interpreting in a similar way as viewed in professional conference interpreting. The noticeable differences are the use of tactical and strategic military terminology and also military jargons. And that the clients of defense interpreters are mostly above 50 years old with conservative tendencies.

Once the WOs are deployed to an individual army unit, they do practical jobs such as translating documents as orders for joint operations, technical manuals and cooperation requests to USFK. The WOs interpret for cooperation between the joint troops, guide foreign VIPs in Korea and accompany Korean officers when they go abroad. They also do briefings for joint operations.

4.4. Advice for Selecting and Training Interpreting WOs

The KDLI is now intensively training non-commissioned T&I officers, focusing on the defense area. They say, “short-term intensive training is

performed with a focus on real exercise” and “individual feedback is provided after discerning personal advantages and shortcomings.” The training focuses on consecutive interpreting. Their specific missions include document translation (combined operation orders, field manuals, coordination documents with the US Army), interpreting for combined troops, escort interpreting for Korean officers in overseas trips, guiding foreign VIPs and briefing for combined operations. Thus, their missions are quite comprehensive and highly important and their selection and training must be strict and meticulous.

4.4.1 Advice for Selecting Interpreting WOs

The screening proceeds in three tests and the first is examining career papers on certified linguistic marks such as the TOEIC, TOEFL, TEPS, FLEX, and G-TELP. In the second English test, the first test passers are subject to tests in interpreting, translation and interview. In interpreting and translation, English and Korean texts are given in both simple and complex sentences to be switched in the other language and during the interview, questions are asked individually on current affairs and domestic and international security.

WOs are selected for interpreting and translation jobs, so linguistic capability is a screening criteria. In order to prevent misinterpretations such as the one aforementioned, we have to check whether the candidates are good at current affairs and security-related matters. If we are to add one thing in testing WOs, mother-tongue capability should not be overlooked. Until recently, too much focus was on B language ability in testing linguistic capability. A proper command of mother tongue is very important in the military setting where strict hierarchy and discipline are required. Lee (2011) mentioned the importance of commanding exact mother tongue in the army and took the example of the sentence “CFC is also KORCOM.” CFC is an abbreviation of Combined Forces Command and KORCOM means Korea Command. Thus, if “CFC is also KORCOM” is literally translated into “CFC is also KORCOM”,

the sentence would not be understood properly and it can disturb the process of the meeting. The US army is used to identically put the name of the troop and the rank of its command, the sentence should be translated as “CFC commander also performs the duties of the Korean commander as well.” The importance of proper command of mother tongue is more and more emphasized and it is why Korean composition is necessarily included in testing the applicants for translation majors in Interpreting schools. In specific groups such as the army, not only everyday general Korean but military jargons should be communicated more exactly. Once WOs are selected for interpreting and translation duty, they will be busy discerning military jargons and related knowledge, so the test of Korean related to the military setting must be included in the screening.

4.4.2 Quality Assessment in Military Interpreting

Park (2015) investigated the quality criteria of IOs in Korea. Firstly, he surveyed 11 IOs to examine which quality criteria were deemed important by the officers. Next, the officers were asked to evaluate recorded videos of trainees interpreting from both Korean to English and from English to Korean. Finally, he examined whether the interpreters' expectations matched the officers' evaluation of trainees' interpreting performances using SEM (Structural Equation Modeling). Over the years, expectation surveys have shown that professional interpreters regard “content-related” criteria more important than “form-related” or “delivery-related” criteria. Results of the expectation survey also reveal that IOs regard content-related criteria as the most important criteria. However, actual evaluation results show with statistical significance that form-related criteria have higher impact on the total score than any other criteria regardless of trainees' interpreting directions. Additionally, he suggests that delivery-related criteria such as “pleasant voice” and “native accent” do not factor into the total score.

4.4.3 Advice for Training T&I WOs

In the case of the T&I officer who served in the Korean rehabilitation and peace-keeping troop dispatched in 2004 to Iraq called Zaytun Division (meaning 'olive' in Arabic), interpreting was mostly done via video conference system. The main task of the officer was "translating data on the local situation internally collected and drafted, joining the video conference and interpreting" (Shin 2012:15). His predecessor said that he was responsible for a variety of tasks such as video conference interpreting, document translation, rehabilitation work, internal event assistance, VIP meetings, and military munitions procurement (Lee 2011:16).

Thus, T&I WOs would be responsible for processing small and large meetings with various backgrounds and using interpreting techniques such as consecutive, whispering, video and site interpreting. Since they would be in charge of more unpredictable tasks than general in-house interpreters, training for simple consecutive interpreting may not suffice to accomplish a variety of possible tasks to fall upon them after assignment. They should be trained not only for consecutive interpreting, but also for whispering and video conferencing. In order not to repeat the misinterpreting introduced above, they should also be informed on local and international situations through a detailed curriculum. "In the joint exercise and training, T&I officers might take over more tasks than in the field, such as interpreting their direct commanders or staff and even interpreting real time video conferences with the US headquarters" (Lee 2011:82). WOs should also be trained like students of interpreting schools to familiarize themselves with interpreting equipment. In preparation for video conferences they should start with turning on the microphone when they speak and turning it off when their counterparts speak, as they do in interpreting schools. They should learn how to interpret through the microphone, control their voice and say "Over" when they finish their words. In the U.S. Defense Language Institute, the role model for The Korea

Defense Language Institute, Guided Proficiency Test in low volume languages is part of their curriculum to train their trainees for low volume languages in video conferencing. Thus, we should incorporate specific training for a variety of situations and the use of suitable interpreting techniques.

In addition, education on manners and protocol for foreign VIPs should also be covered in the curriculum.

“Meetings among military commanders are regarded as of great importance for strengthening and maintaining friendly relationship, improving joint exercise operation capabilities, etc. Office calls, formal dinners or banquets are considered as equally important or of greater value as formal meeting of military exchanges. In these functions, the roles of interpreting officers are more conspicuous.” (Lee 2011:111)

Thus, in training T&I WOs, facial expressions, atmosphere creation, gestures and attires should also be emphasized for protocol interpreting.

Lastly, defense interpreting training should also include lessons on specific cultures of counterpart countries. In the U.S. Defense Language Institute, they have culturally-based language education. Language acquisition is dependent on how well one understands the culture, religion, belief and value systems, economic strata, and geo-political climate of a particular nation” (Homepage of DLI). They distinguish regional languages in the Middle East, Asia, Europe and South America and teach them with cultural knowledge. In the Korea Defense Language Institute, they teach not only English but Chinese, Russian, Japanese, French, German, Arabic, etc., but they do not emphasize the culture of each country. A language is properly commanded only when it is accompanied by each cultural information.

In this regard, collaboration with specialized Interpreting schools would help upgrade the efficiency of conducting more professional interpreting expertise training.

5. Conclusion

Until recently, defense interpreting has not been accessed easily since it is related to classified national security matters. This is why outside interpreters had difficulties in conducting defense interpreting. Likewise, there has been almost no research on defense interpreting. Those interpreting officers who are enlisted for compulsory military service leave the army after 3 years of service, when they become proficient in interpreting. When it comes to career officers from military academies, they are reluctant to continue their interpreting service because it is not helpful to their military career.

Now that the Korea Defense Language Institute has been established to conduct more systematic and efficient defense interpreting education, interpreting training has been integrated in the army. Later, the T&I WO program has also been set up out of necessity for systematic support. A structural foundation has been provided for fostering and supplying professional defense interpreters. At this juncture, analysis and review of the present status of defense interpreting education and the newly introduced system is an indispensable step for the practice and research in defense interpreting.

Defense interpreting and interpreter training in the army should be managed by the army in terms of curriculum and pedagogy. In general, in-house interpreters are employed by an organization after receiving professional education and undergoing the process of learning relevant terminology and expertise. In the case of commissioned and WOs, as in-house army personnel, they usually fall short of acquiring sufficient professional interpreting skills. In other words, the substance for defense interpreting can be obtained through professional military training, but the skills needed for interpreting should be complemented by collaborating with professional interpreting schools. The army is an organization which requires secrecy obligations, contacting civil organizations are limited, so interpreting schools would serve as the better choice in complementing and improving its educational practices.

We hope that a more realistic and efficient method would be presented in the subsequent research papers with more data on the reality and curriculum of defense interpreting training.

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[Abstract]

Interpreting Warrant Officer System and Defense Interpreting in Korea

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In May, 2012, a new system of Interpreting Warrant Officer (WO) was introduced in the Korean Army under the directive of Korea's Defense Ministry. The rationale of the system was to meet the increasing demands of translation and interpretation (T&I) from the joint operations of the Korea-U.S. Army. It also aimed at maintaining the continuity and upgrading the professionalism of T&I jobs in the army by complementing the existing system of Interpreting Officers (IOs). Earlier in 2012, the Korea Defense Language Institute (KDLI) was established to incorporate the foreign language training of the entire Korean armies (the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force including the IO education. Until 2012, IOs were selected and trained respectively by each army according to its characteristics and features. Now the incorporated IO training period is 12 weeks, just half of that for WOs. The curriculum for WOs and IOs is focused on T & I only, while the Advanced course for higher ranks has an introductory T & I class in its curriculum. This paper casts a glance at the history of defense interpreting and its education in Korea before and after the new system of WOs. For the newly-established system to take root, some parts in of the current education process need to be complemented to improve the level of Korea's defense language services.

▶ Key Words: defense interpreting, IO, WO, NCO, defense interpreter training and education

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