

7th International Symposium on Live Subtitling and Accessibility
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PANEL 2: EMERGING AREAS: HYBRID FORMS AND INTERLINGUAL LIVE SUBTITLING.

“Interlingual subtitling with and without an interpreter; a respeaker’s perspective”

Evan Dorrestein (Subtext Language & Media)

VIDEO PRESENTATION <https://youtu.be/8O20RutOdSM>

ABSTRACT

Evan Dorrestein is a Dutch respeaker and subtitler who studied English at Utrecht University. Starting out as a subtitler for SDH at the NPO in the Netherlands in 2001, he was one of the first subtitlers to start working with the Dutch version of Dragon Naturally Speaking to provide live intralingual subtitles. Back in 2001, standard practice was to provide live subtitling with two people: a velotypist and a subtitler/editor who would interpret for the velotypist. With the advent of speech recognition software from 2003 onwards, both editors and velotypists began to provide live subtitling on their own. When academic research began, this new way of working became known as respeaking and over the years, the practice has evolved into exactly that: respeaking rather than interpreting in the same language. The focus shifted, spurred on by the demands of OFCOM in the UK, to verbatim subtitles. Reading speed became less important for live subtitling, in favour of a more integral and complete rendering of the speech on TV.

After having worked as an SDH subtitler and respeaker for five years, Evan became a freelancer and started to subtitle from English to Dutch. His respeaking work continued for commercial broadcasters in the Netherlands. He also trained new respeakers to work for these channels. In 2018 Evan started to work on location increasingly often, respeaking intralingually for companies and institutions. He started to focus on subtitling from Dutch to English and on English intralingual

respeaking. His freelance work would regularly involve collaboration with interpreters, who would translate from Dutch to English or vice versa. Sometimes clients wanted to have speech-to-text interpreting but could not or would not hire interpreters. On these occasions Evan would provide speech-to-text interpreting, or interlingual respeaking, from Dutch to English or from English to Dutch.

Having had both the experiences of working with trained professionals who would interpret and of respeaking interlingually by himself, Evan has had the opportunity to witness both ways of working first-hand. What is the view of the respeaker when it comes to the skill of interlingual respeaking? Can it be done on a high level that can compete with trained interpreters or are there limits to what respeakers are capable of? Is it a question of training respeakers or is the workload too high in a real-time setting to provide interpreting and speech-to-text reporting at the same time? What are the pros and cons for the client?

Evan shares his experiences and tries to find recommendations based on experiences from the field rather than the world of academia. Looking ahead, the question looms whether intralingual respeaking in combination with automatic translation by Google Translate might be the best of both worlds. Or is automatic translation itself developing at such a speed that there is no more need for respeakers or interpreters at all, and if so, in what settings? Questions that will be tackled from a respeaker's perspective.