



UNIT 1. MEDIA ACCESSIBILITY

ELEMENT 5. MEDIA ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

LIVE SUBTITLING

Video Lecture Transcript

Slide 1

This is unit 1, Media Accessibility; element 5, Media accessibility services, video lecture Live subtitling.

I am Anna Matamala, from Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

Slide 2

In this short lecture I will focus on live subtitles, subtitles which are produced and delivered live. This does not cover scenarios where a full text of what is going to be said is available. In this case, the subtitles can be prepared beforehand and then they are just sent out live using a specific software.

Slide 3

Live subtitles have been traditionally intralingual (for instance, English into English) and their purpose has been to make the source content

accessible for those who cannot hear the original correctly. Needless to say that the usefulness of live subtitling has expanded beyond this user group.

Slide 4

However, more recently interlingual live subtitling is beginning to gain ground. Live subtitlers are being trained to produce subtitles from a source language A into a target language B. A fine combination of the skills of interpreters and subtitlers is needed in this case. I invite you to learn more about the ILSA project (Interlingual Live Subtitling for Access).

Slide 5

Live subtitles can be produced through different systems: by means of a keyboard or by means of speech recognition software. In the case of keyboards, there are different ways of creating subtitles: through stenotype, Velotype, or a standard QWERTY keyboard. Stenotype is a specialized keyboard that stenographers use for shorthand use. You have probably seen them in court. Velotype is a specific type of keyboard developed in the Netherlands specially for live subtitling. It allows to create syllables or full words by pressing different keys at the same time. Its learning process is shorter than stenotype. The LTA project (Live Text Access) focuses on this type of keyboard. Please check their website.

Apart from these specific keyboards, you can also use a standard keyboard in different ways: one person takes care of everything; two people work together in a tandem, or different professionals are positioned in a circle and take turns, going around as they subtitle. This is the case, for instance, for Catalan television.



Slide 6

Respeaking is another system: a professional subtitler repeats, rephrases or translates what is heard, and a speech recognition system transfers these spoken words into written text. Respeakers cannot speak naturally, they need to dictate the words in a very specific way and also add the punctuation. So they would say: "I have an important announcement to make. Full stop."

Nowadays you can also find software that produces live transcripts and even subtitles: Webcaptioner, LiveCaption, or even Youtube. An interesting exercise would be for you to check how these different systems perform in your language. The quality may vary a lot depending on the speaker, the audio quality or the content and the language.

Slide 7

Live subtitling is used for live programmes in television, but you will also see it very often in other live events such as conferences. The professionals producing the subtitles can actually be in the same place where the event takes place, or they can be performing a remote live subtitling. I have seen professionals based in Canada providing live subtitles for an event happening in Switzerland.

Slide 8

Recorded subtitles usually appear as a block on screen. They are called block subtitles, pop-on subtitles, or pop-up subtitles. They appear on screen as a full subtitle and they disappear as a full subtitle. In live subtitling this is not generally the case. Very often, live subtitles appear and disappear continuously, they scroll on the screen. Once the bottom



line is full, the top line disappears. These subtitles may have up to three lines and the subtitles may appear letter by letter, word by word or line by line. A variation of this modality is when subtitles appear continuously but disappear as a block. It is also the case, especially in live events, that what is offered does not have the form of a subtitle, but it is in fact a transcript displayed on a screen, either in front of the audience or on a mobile device.

Slide 9

These are some basic facts about live subtitling, but there is much more to learn. A recommended reading is also Pablo Romero-Fresco's book "Subtitling through speech recognition: respeaking".

Slide 10

This video lecture has been prepared by Anna Matamala, from Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. You can reach me at anna.matamala@uab.cat.

Copyright and disclaimer: The project EASIT has received funding from the European Commission under the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships for Higher Education programme, grant agreement 2018-1-ES01-KA203-05275.

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



Partners:

