[=]LTA
LiveTextAccess

UNIT 1

Element 1 – Learning Outcome 3

TRANSCRIPT: UNIVERSAL DESIGN AND REAL-TIME SUBTITLES

Table of contents

1   Slide 1

LiveTextAccess. Training for real-time intralingual subtitlers.

2   Slide 2

Unit 1. Understanding accessibility. Element 1. Basic concepts.

3   Slide 3

This video lecture raises awareness and calls real-time subtitlers to action by digging into the question about how subtitles can contribute to creating accessible working settings that are universally usable.

My name is Rocío Bernabé from the Internationale Hochschule SDI München, in Germany. I have prepared this video lecture in collaboration with the European Federation of Hard of Hearing, in short, EFHOH.

4   Slide 4

On completion of this training sequence, you will be able to identify features to design accessible settings that take into consideration Universal Design.

5   Slide 5

The agenda. We start recalling the definition of Universal Design. Then we discuss how real-time subtitlers can contribute as co-creators.

6   Slide 6

Universal Design and real-time subtitling settings.

7 Slide 7

The idea of universally usable or "one size fits all" means that design should be usable for all. In 1998, Ronald Mace explained that Universal Design is the goal, but this goal cannot be achieved completely because each of us has different needs. This is when "personalisation" comes into play. Personalisation is understood as minimum adaptations that must be made in an environment to enable each of us to achieve usability. These adaptations should be both possible and simple to make, especially in environments that have been designed following the principles of Universal Design.

An example that illustrates this idea would be the design of multimodal learning materials that do not depend on a single sense like sight, movement, hearing, or touch.

8 Slide 8

If we take this idea to real-time settings, such as television, face-to-face or remote, we see that each setting should offer alternatives for personalisation. The extent to which this is possible usually depends on both technology, and the ability of a subtitler to adjust his or her output to the needs of the audience.

9 Slide 9

Subtitles already promote equity because they provide a written equivalent to audio content.

To provide the best service possible, real-time subtitlers can undertake several actions before the meeting. Some examples are to request information to prepare for the job. This can be the agenda, the list of participants, or other materials. It is also important to clarify where you will sit at the location, and if there is enough space for your whole equipment. If it is online, you can ask whether only the client will be watching the subtitles on a separate screen, or if the subtitles will be available for all participants. Sometimes, a confidentiality agreement will be necessary; for instance, for medical consultations. Confidentiality is also an aspect that concerns transcripts. While in some countries and contexts providing the transcript is not a problem, in others this is not allowed.

Take care of yourself. Talk to the client and the organiser and agree on the breaks. Also, discuss the possibility of having to intervene, for instance, when there is too much background noise that is hindering your work. Lastly, you could ask the organiser to introduce you and your role at the beginning of the meeting, which will raise awareness among participants.

10   Slide 10

Flexibility in use means to provide subtitles in a way that can be used according to the preferences of your client or the audience during of after the real-time situation.

Flexibility in TV settings is more limited than in face-to-face or remote ones. Indeed, it is not long ago that subtitles were only showed through the Teletext. Now, with smart TVs, the possibilities are increasing and, for example, closed captions are quite common.

In face-to-face and remote settings, personalisation is easier to implement. Technical possibilities are greater, and subtitlers often have more control over how to show the subtitles. New technologies such as Text on Top enable subtitlers to position and re-position subtitles *ad hoc* and, for instance, place them either at the bottom or at the top of PowerPoint slides, or even show subtitles in individual tablets or laptops close to users. Another personalisation example is the software Text on Tap, which allows users to choose their own settings.

At events, technical staff sometimes implement elegant solutions such as combining all input streams (slides, speaker input, subtitles, and sign language interpretation) on one big screen.

Another example of flexible use is the Norwegian opera house in Oslo. Here, subtitles are on a screen at the back of the seat in front of you and it is the choice of the individual to turn them on and off, and to choose the language you want to use.

Lastly, flexibility in use can also mean using the subtitles afterwards. One example are hansards, which are reports of what has been said in Parliament and can be accessed online after the debates.

Making transcripts available can be tricky. In educational settings, transcripts are often provided to students because they cannot read the subtitles and take notes at the classroom at the same time. Conversely, transcripts are not provided after conferences. This grounds on the idea that the spoken word cannot be re-heard after the conference and so should real-time subtitles not be re-read afterwards either.

11   Slide 11

How to use and operate subtitles should be simple and intuitive. Operating subtitles on TV or on a tablet may seem quite straightforward. However, this task may be more difficult in settings such as at theatres or at the movies. And it becomes even more interesting if we consider that there might be children in the audience.

12   Slide 12

Perceptible information is principle number 4 [in Universal Design].

Perceiving subtitles should be as easy as possible or, in other words, require the less effort possible.

13   Slide 13

Making subtitles perceptible to users requires considering 2 main aspects: legibility and synchrony.

Legibility deals with features that affect the decoding of information during the first interaction between a reader and a text. In written texts, perception is influenced by parameters that range from typographical to paratextual. Some examples are font-size, font-type, contrast, and a steady position on the screen. The way the words appear on the screen also plays a role. Users often prefer whole words, phrases or sentences, over subtitles that show letter by letter.

Here the context plays a role again. While in TV personalisation of these settings is more limited, in face-to-face and remote contexts, subtitlers can react to the preferences of the audience and, for instance, change the font-type, the size or even the colour, for example, from white on a black background to yellow on a black background.

Synchrony is also a feature that supports perception. As you probably remember from other lectures, persons with hearing loss also resort to lip-reading during communication. In this sense, subtitles should be in synchrony with the speech as much as possible. In online meetings, this implies that the camera shift must be quick.

As my colleague, Aïda Regel Poulsen says: "When synchrony fails, real-time subtitling becomes wrong-time subtitling".

14   Slide 14

Principle number 5 is tolerance of error.

We all make mistakes. The question here is what type of errors can subtitlers predict and already plan how to react, in order to be quickly solved in real-time settings.

With regards to spelling mistakes, mistakes must be corrected in real-time. Users of subtitles often prefer corrections over deleting the whole subtitle and re-typing it again. As for errors that concern your technical equipment, you should always plan a plan B. Reaching the venue timely and testing the equipment before the job seems to be a good strategy. Lastly, carrying a spare keyboard, cable, adapter, or microphone can sometimes become very handy.

15　　Slide 15

Low physical effort is the sixth principle. However, in real-time subtitling, low cognitive effort seems more suitable.

As discussed in previous lectures, persons with hearing loss always make an extra effort to understand. Subtitlers can facilitate this process by improving readability of subtitles. These improvements can be in terms of linguistic correctness, proper style and clarity. In some cases, this will mean choosing between verbatim, or word-to-word subtitles, and subtitles that are edited to avoid repetitions, to reorder the message or to add contextual information.

Finally, on face-to-face and remote settings, subtitlers can also more easily adapt the output to the needs of the audience. For instance, when working with audiences with a low command of a language, subtitlers can try to type slower and leave out difficult words, while maintaining the message of the speaker. In these cases, we could also talk about universally design content because more people will be able to follow a speech, or a meeting. Of course, this is only possible for certain topics and when the information density is not too high.

16　　Slide 16

Lastly, principle 7, "Size and space for approach and use". As in the previous one, we propose a slight change to "Size and space for reading and use".

Principle 7 is grounded on the assumption that we, as humans, have different shapes and sizes. Similarly, we could say that our reading abilities and knowledge are different. This means that the subtitling speed should be based on average reading speed rates. Of course, the subtitler needs to adjust to the speed of the speaker. In the case that a speaker speaks very fast subtitlers only have 2 options here: either to type or to respeak faster, or to kindly ask the speaker to slow down a bit.

17   Slide 17

To recap, we can say that universally designed settings allow for personalisation, which is a key factor in the current understanding of accessibility as a whole.

We have also seen that real-time subtitlers are co-creators of such settings and can influence them to make them universally more accessible. However, we have also seen that some settings are less adaptable than others.

Lastly, all the possibilities and differences that we have seen between countries points out that there might be a need for more harmonization in the field. Especially now, that several online tools have emerged during the pandemic.

I hope that I could provide you with food for thought for your future job as a real-time intralingual subtitler.

As for now, I say good-bye and many thanks.

18   Slide 18

Exercises.

19   Slide 19

The exercises for this video lecture are in the Trainer's Guide for Unit 1 and in the PowerPoint presentation.

20   Voiceover

LTA - LiveTextAccess. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. SDI - Internationale Hochschule. Scuola Superiore per Mediatori Linguistici. 2DFDigital. The European Federation of Hard of Hearing People – EFHOH. VELOTYPE. SUB-TI ACCESS. European Certification and Qualification Association – ECQA. Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union.

Erasmus+ Project: 2018-1-DE01-KA203-004218. The information and views set on this presentation are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Union. Neither the European Union institutions and bodies nor any person acting on their behalf may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained here.

21   Disclaimer, acknowledgement and copyright information

Authors: Rocío Bernabé Caro, Aïda Regel Poulsen, Marcel Bobeldijk, and Wim Gerbecks

Disclaimer: This project has been co-funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

22   Additional metadata[1]

Title or file name of resource	U1_E1_LO3_Universal-Design-Real-Time-Settings_TRANSCRIPT.docx
Version	Final
Description of resource	Audio transcript for the video lecture about Universal Design and real-time subtitles
Keywords	Principles of Universal design and the role of the real-time subtitler
Author/Contributor	Internationale Hochschule SDI München, EFHOH
File type	Text
Length (pages, actual length of audio or video)	9 pages
Copyright holder	Internationale Hochschule SDI München, EFHOH
Other related pedagogical assets	PowerPoint presentation
Related subject or skill area	Unit 1. Understanding accessibility. Element 1. Learning Outcome 3.
Publisher	LiveTextAccess
Format	PDF file
Issued	22 January 2021
Language	English
Licence	CC BY-SA 4.0
Accessibility	PDF checked with TingTun
Certified by	ECQA: http://ecqa.org/

---

[1] The scheme used is an adaptation of the format provided by the EU project 2014-1-DE01-KA203-000679