



UNIT 2

Element 3 – Learning Outcome 3

TRANSCRIPT: ADJUST DELAY



Table of contents

1	Slide 1	4
2	Slide 2	4
3	Slide 3	4
4	Slide 4	4
5	Slide 5	4
6	Slide 6	4
7	Slide 7	4
8	Slide 8	5
9	Slide 9	5
10	Slide 10	5
11	Slide 11	5
12	Slide 12	6
13	Slide 13	6
14	Slide 14	6
15	Slide 15	6
16	Slide 16	7
17	Slide 17	7
18	Slide 18	7
19	Slide 19	7
20	Slide 20	7
21	Slide 21	8
22	Slide 22	8
23	Slide 23	8
24	Slide 24	8
25	Slide 25	8
26	Slide 26	9
27	Slide 27	9

28	Disclaimer, acknowledgement and copyright information	10
29	Additional metadata	10

1 Slide 1

LiveTextAccess: Training for real-time intralingual subtitlers.

2 Slide 2

This is Unit 2. Linguistic competence. Element 3. How to cope with speech-related challenges?

3 Slide 3

Adjust delay in real-time intralingual subtitling.

The training materials have been created by UAB and SSML.

4 Slide 4

The learning outcomes for this unit are adjust delay by means of simplification, and apply existing standards and guidelines particularly in TV working contexts.

5 Slide 5

In this unit we will be dealing with the following points:

Delay in real-time intralingual subtitling, delay in TV working contexts, Text simplification, standards and guidelines. We will finish with a summary.

6 Slide 6

Delay in real-time intralingual subtitling.

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The term “delay” in real-time intralingual subtitling refers to the lag between the speaker’s oral speech and the subtitles displayed on the screen. As with any form of live interpretation, there is an inherent delay or latency in real-time intralingual subtitling between a word being spoken and appearing on screen in a subtitle; this results from the time needed for the spoken word to be heard, respoken or typed, recognised and processed through the subtitling software and shown on the screen. The longer the delay, the less satisfactory the viewing experience.

8 Slide 8

In terms of satisfaction, this delay is mostly perceived by deaf and hard-of-hearing viewers as their main disadvantage, as it makes it impossible to combine listening and viewing that allow them also lip reading. According to the latest report of the European Federation of Hard of Hearing published in 2015, quantity of subtitles is sometimes being put above quality. As it is stated in the report, it is essential that quality is maintained alongside increasing quantity; otherwise the purpose of subtitling is lost.

9 Slide 9

In some cases audience lack of knowledge about the complexity involved in the production of real-time intralingual subtitles often led them to make unrealistic demands, such as subtitles should be 100% accurate, with no delay. It should be taken into consideration that real-time subtitles are produced just moments before they can be transmitted. Consequently, they will always lag behind the original audio signal.

10 Slide 10

Delay in TV working contexts.

11 Slide 11

We will start this section with the key factors that have an effect on delay in TV working contexts. Let's look at which are the causes behind. From all the audiovisual content available to audiences, live programs and events pose the greatest challenge to real-time intralingual subtitles, who, in this scenario, are required to provide accurate subtitles that reach the viewers with as limited delay as possible. In fact, unlike pre-recorded subtitling, real-time intralingual subtitling has to be produced in real time, which leads to delay and errors. The delay of real-time intralingual subtitles, specially in TV settings depends largely on the following factors: the availability and use of pre-prepared scripts, the real-time intralingual subtitling technique used, the genre of the programme, the display mode and the occurrence of specific technical issues during transmission.

12 Slide 12

According to several research studies when scripts are available and pre-prepared subtitles are combined with real-time intralingual subtitles, the average delay is reduced to 3-4 seconds and on rare occasions even to 2-3 seconds. However, this is not always possible. In fact it will mainly depend on the genre of the program.

13 Slide 13

There are different genres of programs in the TV working context and all of them present different challenges to real-time intralingual subtitlers in terms of delay. For instance, in the case of sport programmes or events, talk shows and entertainment, utterances of the speakers are more spontaneous than in the news or weather forecast programmes where in most cases a script is available. In addition, in some cases different speakers speak at the same time. These factors make real-time intralingual subtitling more difficult and subtitles seem to be erratic and present a large number of errors and inconsistencies.

14 Slide 14

In terms of delay, subtitles made using fast typing techniques such as Velotype have less delay, an average of 3-5 seconds, than those made by the respeaking technique, which are closer to 6 and often 7 seconds.

15 Slide 15

In terms of display modes, in the UK, real-time intralingual subtitles are displayed verbatim in a word-by-word scrolling mode in order to reduce the delay as much as possible. In countries, such as Germany, Spain and Italy, real-time intralingual subtitles are displayed in blocks. Whereas this last display mode increases delay, since the text is not transmitted automatically until the maximum number of characters in a subtitle row has been filled. In terms of readability, it is easier to read subtitles displayed in blocks than subtitles displayed in scrolling mode. In the next video we will look at an example of delay in a scrolling mode.

16 Slide 16

Finally, there are some intrinsically technical issues related to delay. If a real-time intralingual subtitler receives the live signal at the same time the signal is broadcast, real-time intralingual subtitles will be displayed on the screen with some delay, which is the time needed for the real-time intralingual subtitler to listen and reproduce the speaker's words and for the editor if present to correct and the subtitles that will be displayed on the screen. To minimize latency, some broadcasters delay their signal, something which is known as antenna delay.

17 Slide 17

Text simplification.

18 Slide 18

As it has been described a real-time intralingual subtitler is always fighting against delay. In order to reduce delay real-time intralingual subtitlers apply text reduction or simplification. Two main suggestions are to: eliminate what is not relevant for the comprehension of the message and/or reformulate what is relevant in a concise form. The reduction rate largely depends on the speech rate of the source text and also when the speech is too technical. In all cases, a real-time intralingual must at least try to save the essentials by simplification. And in the case that the speaker speaks too fast or hesitates, text simplification is also needed because a faithful rendering of the source text might not be feasible and would also leave the audience confused.

19 Slide 19

Although there are no strict fixed rules for simplification there are a number of basic guidelines that can be applied by real-time intralingual subtitlers. Some of which are: pay attention to the transition from oral to written mode, formulate short, well-formed sentences, pay attention to segmentation and layout, match the subtitles with the visual information specially in TV working contexts, render the essence of the message within the given reading speed, leave out repetitions and features of orality and leave out or rewrite information of secondary importance, and finally keep in mind what your target audience is expected to know.

20 Slide 20

Standards and guidelines.

21 Slide 21

Several subtitling standards and guidelines include delay as quality indicator along with other aspects such as speed of the subtitling and number and type of errors.

22 Slide 22

There is no fixed international standard rule for delay. It is important to distinguish between standards and guidelines. Standards are ratified by standardisation bodies and are official, while guidelines are recommendations. In fact, different standards are applied in different countries. For instance, in the case of the UK according to the Ofcom standard for subtitling the recommended maximum delay in real-time subtitling is 3 seconds, while in Spain according to the UNE standard for subtitling the recommended maximum delay is 8 seconds. An added problem is that broadcasters often apply different standards depending on the delivery platform. In the case of guidelines it is the case that broadcasters in the same country apply different guidelines, even if they refer to the same standard.

23 Slide 23

Additional main challenges are: Decalage has to be kept as short as possible, Keep up with fast dialogues, Speaker and non-verbal elements identification and Punctuation and segmentation.

24 Slide 24

Summary.

25 Slide 25

As a summary we would like to stress the following points: Delay is the lag between the speaker's oral speech and the subtitles displayed on the screen, it is essential that quality of the real-time intralingual subtitles is maintained alongside increasing quantity, key factors determining delay in TV settings are: availability of scripts and pre-prepared subtitles, subtitling technique used, genre of the program, display mode and technical issues. In addition, to reduce delay real-time intralingual subtitlers apply text reduction or simplification, and there is no fixed international standard rule for delay.

26 Slide 26

Exercises.

27 Slide 27

The exercises for this video lecture are in the trainer's guide and the PowerPoint file.

28 Disclaimer, acknowledgement and copyright information

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