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UNIT 3

Element 1 – Learning Outcome 1

TRANSCRIPT: INPUT TOOLS

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LiveTextAccess: Training for real-time intralingual subtitlers.

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This is unit 3, IT competence. In this presentation, we will be dealing with element 1: Input tools.

3 Slide 3

This will be an introduction to the input tools used by real-time intralingual subtitlers. The materials for this presentation have been created by Sub-Ti Access, an accessibility service provider from Italy. My name is Enrico Pigliacampo, I am an Italian man with a beard and short hair. I will be displayed in a box at the top right corner of each slide.

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The learning outcome for this presentation is to be able to explain the differences, advantages and disadvantages of the different input tools available on the market for both respeaking and typing techniques.

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In this video presentation we will be dealing with the following topics: Input tools for typing techniques, input tools for respeaking and input tools for ASR, which is short for automatic speech recognition.

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The first topic we will talk about is input tools for typing techniques. Among the different tools that real-time intralingual subtitlers and speech-to-text reporters use, we have chosen two that are the best-known ones plus Velotype, which is one the specific techniques of the LTA project.

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Some real-time intralingual subtitlers use the PC keyboard as an input tool. It is easy to find, every computer has one and they are cheap if you need to buy one. Although there are techniques to write faster on the PC keyboard, it is difficult to keep up with the speech as it was not created for this specific purpose. The best-known PC keyboard is the QWERTY keyboard. Although many other PC keyboards have been developed for different uses, some even to increase typing speed, the QWERTY keyboard remains the most commonly used and the most famous one.

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One of the most famous typing techniques for real-time intralingual subtitling and speech-to-text reporting is stenotype. Modern stenotype machines resemble a small piano keyboard. Stenographers can write texts very fast thanks to a combination of keys. An expert stenographer can reach a speed up to 300 words per minute. Stenotype machines are quite expensive, and the technique is hard to learn especially because in some countries there are very few training courses.

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The Velotype keyboard was created by a Dutch company called Velotype. It was created specifically for real-time intralingual subtitlers and speech-to-text reporters. The keyboard enables you to write very fast and keep up even with the fastest speeches. By pressing several keys at the same time, you can write syllables and complete words. The technique is easy to learn. You can learn the basics in a few months. Although you have to buy, or lease, a new keyboard, it is cheaper than other machines and more efficient than a PC keyboard.

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In the second section of this presentation, we will talk about input tools for respeakers. Respeakers can choose from among many different products for each tool they use. The specific tools and software each respeaker use should be chosen according to the context in which he or she works. Of course the main tool is the computer. Each respeaker must choose the most appropriate PC depending on his or her professional needs.

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As well as a computer, the main tools a respeaker needs are headphones and a microphone. Headphones are useful to clearly hear the speaker. Professionals may opt not to use headphones if they are working in a soundproof booth with a loudspeaker. They may also decide not to use headphones if they are in the same room as the speaker. However, if there are many people in the room, it is better to have the audio input from the microphone into the headphones, so as to cancel out background noises. The microphone is a very important tool. It is connected to the computer and the respeaker dictates the text to a speech recognition software through the microphone. If the respeaker is working in a crowded room with a lot of noise, the stenomask is the perfect tool. It is a microphone built into a padded, soundproof enclosure. This ensures acoustic isolation from external noise and the microphone captures only the respeaker's voice.

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Every respeaker needs a speech recognition software. It is a software that turns the vocal input from the microphone into written text. The transcript can then be visualised on other software programmes which the professional uses to edit it and then broadcast it to end-users. We will talk about this kind of software in the lecture on editing software and output tools. The most famous speech recognition among respeakers is Dragon Naturally Speaking, but it is not the only one. Newton is also used by professionals. The PerVoice Subtitling Workstation also uses speech recognition to create subtitles. There are also software programmes which are open source and free of charge. You can search online and try them out to see how a speech recognition software works.

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ASR stands for Automatic Speech Recognition. In the last section of this presentation we will talk very briefly about this kind of software.

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Automatic speech recognition software recognises any speaker's speech and transcribes it. With this kind of software there is no need of a respeaker to repeat the text. Of course, the software will transcribe everything the speaker says and make mistakes when it does not recognise the right words. That is why there must always be a text editor to monitor the transcript, spot any mistakes and correct them.

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Summary.

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To sum up, there are two main points to keep in mind when choosing your tools and techniques. Firstly, in order to choose the best technology, you need to know the work environment in which you are going to work. It is also good to try different techniques and tools to understand which one suits you best and will help you to produce better real-time intralingual subtitles.

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Exercises.

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Search online for at least 3 free speech recognition software applications and try them out. At the end of the exercise, select the best one for you.

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