EVIVA – EVALUATING THE EDUCATION OF INTERPRETERS AND THEIR CLIENTS THROUGH VIRTUAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Report to accompany Deliverable 7.2

EVIVA DISSEMINATION SEMINAR

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1   Introduction

This report aims to provide an overview of the EVIVA dissemination seminar that was organised and held in Brussels, Belgium, on Friday 28 November 2014. The event was arranged in order to raise awareness among target stakeholders (e.g. from European training institutions, interpreting practitioners and professional associations, researchers and designers of VLEs) of the outcomes of the evaluation conducted during the lifetime of the project and what these outcomes may mean for the design of future VLEs and their use in interpreter training. This report focuses on the organisation of the event and the audience reached (section 2), the presentations that were given and the resultant discussion (3), and what opportunities for further research and dialogue have emerged from the seminar (4).

2   Organisation and participation

The EVIVA dissemination seminar was designed to be a smaller-scale event than the seminar that was organised at the end of the EVIVA project's predecessor IVY. Given that the EVIVA project had concentrated primarily on evaluating the different remote technologies and on the evaluation methods used to do so, it was agreed among the consortium that it would be more productive to try to involve those stakeholders and decision-makers who would be able to make best use of the evaluation outcomes and with whom it may be possible to engage in future dialogue and development work. The flyer that was designed and circulated for the seminar can be found in the Appendix.

Figure 1: Information about the seminar on the project website (www.virtual-interpreting.net)

Participants therefore included interpreter trainers and researchers in the field of interpreting, 3D virtual world researchers and designers, and representatives from the EU institutions. In total, the seminar was attended by 29 participants, including:

- Representatives from the European institutions (European Commission, European Parliament)
- Representatives from professional interpreter associations (e.g. National Register of Public Service Interpreters, Chartered Institute of Linguists)
- Professional interpreters and interpreting agencies
- Interpreter trainers
- Academics from the teaching and research communities, in both interpreting, language education and virtual world technologies

The external evaluator for the project was also invited in order for her to gain an overview of the outcomes of the project and to have the opportunity to discuss the project with members of the consortium.

Brussels was chosen as the venue for the seminar as the consortium had contacts at the Welsh Board of Higher Education (WHEB) who had kindly agreed to host the seminar at their offices in Brussels. The consortium decided to hold the final project meeting at the same time as the dissemination seminar in order to minimise travel costs, and the first day of the consortium's project meeting was also held at the WHEB offices.

Figure 2: EVIVA seminar, WHEB, Brussels, 28 November 2014

3   Speakers and presentations

3.1   External speakers

Although the primary aim of the seminar was to disseminate the outcomes of the evaluation conducted in the EVIVA project, the partners agreed that it was important to contextualise the EVIVA work by situating it among other projects and initiatives using technologies in the field of interpreter training and, more broadly, among research and developments in the use of 3D virtual worlds for educational purposes. It was therefore decided that external speakers would be invited to present on these topics in the morning sessions, with the remainder of the morning and the afternoon sessions were devoted to presentations from the EVIVA consortium and discussion.

The seminar started with two presentations from the European institutions: Katerina Dara-Lepoura from the European Parliament gave an update on the Virtual Classes initiative and introduced the newly developed 'Pre-selection' tool, followed by Fernando Leitão from the European Commission talking about the updates and improvements made to the Speech Repository platform, now called Speech Repository 2.0. The Virtual Classes initiative and the Speech Repository were presented at the seminar held at the end of the IVY project – the precursor to the EVIVA project – in November 2012, so it was considered fitting to have an update on these activities.

Katerina Dara-Lepoura showed how the Virtual Classes project has expanded, with five additional universities joining the scheme which enables trainee interpreters to work with and receive feedback from interpreters at the European institutions via video link. Another way in which the European Parliament is now exploiting the affordances of technology is their 'Pre-selection' tool, which is a test that prospective candidates for the full accreditation test can carry out online, with only those candidates reaching the required level being invited to the full accreditation test on-site. She also demonstrated the procedures that were put in place to ensure that the use of the Pre-selection tool did not lead to missing out on potentially good candidates. The tool is an example of how using online technologies can be used to manage time resources, while not compromising the overall aim of the activity, namely recruiting the best and most suitable candidates to work in the European institutions.

The Speech Repository 2.0 platform has also undergone significant development work since it was last presented at the IVY seminar. **Fernando Leitão** showed how the interface has become more user-friendly and interactive, and how the Speech Repository is now publicly and freely accessible. The new My Speech Repository is the individual user's site which, with log-in access, gives access to additional functionalities and a greater number of speeches which the user can use for practising the skills required for conference interpreting.

Continuing with the use of speeches in conference interpreter training, **Jesús de Manuel Jerez** from the University of Granada gave a presentation on the suitability of real-life recorded speeches for interpreter training which is not always considered to be appropriate by some interpreter trainers. With reference to the work carried out with the recordings contained in the Marius project, the benefits of using real-life speeches at the start of interpreter training were shown. This presentation chimed with a number of the premises underpinning the approach taken in the EVIVA project, namely the use of material taken from real-life situations (cf. e.g. the BACKBONE videos and the dialogues derived from these videos used as prepared content in the IVY 3D virtual environment; the use of live role-play to simulate real-life situations, with all the challenges that that might pose for a novice interpreter; and, more broadly, questions about realism and authenticity which were also exposed during the EVIVA evaluation sessions).

As Barbar**a Moser-Mercer** was not able to attend the seminar on the day, she provided a video message which was played to the seminar participants. The message covered key notions of interpreting pedagogy, such as the flipped classroom concept, underpinned these by insights from cognitive interpreting theories, before examining barriers for innovation and using new technologies in education.

Figure 3: Video message from Barbara Moser-Mercer

The final presentation before the EVIVA presentations was given by **Tugba Tokel** from the Computer Educational and Instructional Technology Department at the Middle East Technical University in Ankara, Turkey. Moving away from the presentations focusing on the specific use of technologies in interpreter training, this presentation showcased how 3D virtual worlds are being used for different educational purposes and the factors that must be taken into consideration when using such technologies. Again, the questions of realism and how realistic a simulated environment can be were raised. She also discussed the barriers to accepting and adopting 3D virtual worlds for educational purposes.

3.2   Presentations by the EVIVA consortium

The presentations given by the external speakers therefore served to show a number of different initiatives using technologies for educational, training and assessment purposes that are being developed and used, both in terms of interpreter training and more widely in other educational contexts. The first presentation about the EVIVA project sought to demonstrate how the project was innovative in its objective to explore and evaluate different technologies that can be used in interpreter training and how those technologies might best be used in that context. Sabine Braun (Surrey) gave the first presentation to set out and rationalise the aims and objectives of the project and to provide an overview of the evaluation methods that were used.

The learning environments selected for evaluation were presented (Sabine Braun [Surrey] and Robert Gittins [Bangor]), and this presentation included an overview of how the bespoke 3D virtual environment IVY in Second Life had been adapted and developed during the EVIVA project. Looking to the future, this presentation also pointed to some of the constraints of Second Life as a long-term solution for implementation and to other platforms that might offer more flexibility. Technological developments such as photo-realism and greater animation functionalities (e.g. allowing lip synchronisation, facial expressions, etc.) were also demonstrated with a view to showing the potential that these environments have for future builds and implementations.

The afternoon session was then dedicated to presentations showing insights from the evaluation conducted in the EVIVA project. It had been agreed at the fourth project meeting that, given the wealth of evaluation data that had been collected and analysed, partners would concentrate on a specific aspect or focus in their detailed analysis (cf. case studies in the Evaluation Report, Deliverable 6.1).

Picking up on some of the issues introduced in Tugba Tokel's presentation relating to user experience in 3D virtual worlds, Jonathan Roberts (Bangor) presented the User Experience Questionnaire (UEQ) which was used as one part of the evaluation toolkit, followed by the results of the initial UEQ analysis across all four environments that were included in the evaluation.

The presentation given by Petra Hoffstaedter and Kurt Kohn (STC) and Sabine Braun (Surrey) looked at how the concept of the 'flipped classroom' could be adopted and adapted as a means of analysing and understanding the evaluation data. A case study approach was used to highlight the different paths taken by two interpreting students with contrasting abilities and learner profiles, showing how the use of the tools and the activities conducted with them can be tailored with individual learner preparation and coaching.

Moving on from issues of linguistic performance and strategies in interpreting, Elena Davitti and Sara Dicerto (Surrey) focused on how the different technologies can support the development of skills relating to interaction during interpreter-mediated communication and student awareness of the multitasking nature of interpreting. In a similar vein, Maria Tymczyńska and Marta Kajzer-Wietrzny (UAM) examined the opportunities for developing professional awareness offered by live interaction activities in the videoconference and IVY Live mode environments.

The final presentation on the agenda (Konstantinos Kritsis, UCY) was not given as the presenter was unwell and at the last minute was unable to attend the seminar. However, the abstract and slides show that the presentation aimed to address users' non-verbal behaviour in the different environments, and how an analysis of this non-verbal behaviour can be used to draw conclusions about how the students use the technologies and about their engagement with the task.

Each of the EVIVA presentations therefore sought to provide a snapshot of the evaluation activities carried out and the methods used during the project, and what the analysis can tell us about the suitability of the different environments for different activities.

3.3 Discussion panel

The discussion panel (Guy Aston, Bologna; Andrew Gillies, AIIC; Brooke Townsley, Middlesex University; members of the EVIVA consortium) covered three emerging themes from the seminar:

- *Learner preparation – Reflection – Coaching*: The necessity for both technological learner induction and pedagogical learner preparation and the implications of both were discussed at length. Particular attention was drawn to the importance of reflection on student performance (self, peer, group reflection) and continuous coaching.

- *Pedagogical implementation* emerged as another key notion. The institutional implications were discussed including, for example, different models for embedding the use of VLEs in institutional contexts, the relation that this bears with current models for recruitment of interpreting tutors, the role of financial resources and the role of inter-institutional cooperation.

- *Development over time*: One point that was highlighted in particular was the fact that the EVIVA project captured a short-term snapshot of ICT in interpreter training but that this needs to be followed up with long-term studies investigating how users and institutions adjust to the use of ICTs over time and that one particularly important element of this would be to research adaptation processes.

3.4   Use of social media

Twitter was the main tool used during the seminar to raise awareness of the project's activities. The project Twitter account @vr_interpreting and the hashtag **#EVIVAseminar** were used. Additional hashtags included #1nt (interpreting) and #terptech (interpreting technologies).

The project partners and a number of seminar participants also tweeted from their own accounts. The Twitter feed for the seminar was collated using **Storify**.
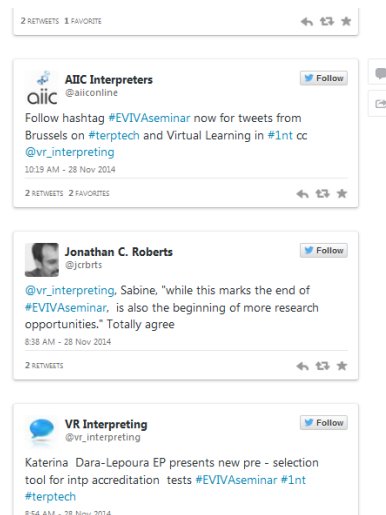
Figures 4 and 5: Twitter feed (above) and Storify of Twitter feed (below) from EVIVA seminar (https://storify.com/vr_interpreting/evivaseminar)

4   List of supporting documentation and materials

The following documents are available in PDF format:

- Seminar advertisement
- Seminar agenda
- Seminar abstract booklet
- Signed participant list