UNIVERSITY OF SURREY

Evaluating the learning processes of trainee interpreters and their clients in virtual learning environments

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This presentation

Aims

➤ Introduce the IVY and EVIVA projects in the context of Masters programmes in interpreting

➤ Demonstrate the development of the IVY 3D virtual environment

➤ Present findings of initial evaluation and introduce follow-up project EVIVA

Overview

❖ **Contextualisation** – the IVY solution in its teaching and learning context

❖ **Development** – design and build of the IVY virtual environment

❖ *Evaluation* – methodology used to evaluate the IVY-VE

❖ *Findings* – outcomes of functional/pedagogical evaluation and next steps

Contextualisation

Centre for Translation Studies, University of Surrey

➢ Well-established teaching and research centre in translation and interpreting

➢ 8 Masters-level programmes in Translation and Interpreting

➢ PhD programme in Translation and Interpreting

➢ Strong research profile

 ➢ In interpreting, our focus is on research into the use of new technologies in interpreting and interpreter education, especially:

   → Videoconference and remote interpreting (e.g. European projects AVIDICUS 1 and 2: quality and viability of videoconference interpreting in legal proceedings)

   → Use of 3D virtual environments in interpreter education (European projects IVY and EVIVA)

Contextualisation: Where we started – and why

Globalisation, inter-social

Business interpreting

Migration, intra-social

Public Service Interpreting

Interpreting landscape

Smaller languages – working across fields – diversification of skills – new methods of interpreting

Education and training

- Insufficient number of training programmes
- Reduced teaching hours in existing programmes

Available resources

- Lack of teaching resources (for some language combinations and types of interpreting)
- Lack of qualified tutors

Client side

Need for clients to understand how to work effectively through an interpreter

Contextualisation

➢ **Directive 2010/64/EU on the right to interpretation and translation in criminal proceedings:**

Those who train judges, prosecutors and judicial staff shall…
"**pay special attention to the particularities of communicating with the assistance of an interpreter**." (Art. 6)

➢ **SIGTIPS (European Language Council Special Interest Group on Translation and Interpreting for Public Services):**

The staff of Public Service Providers…
"should be **trained to work with interpreters**" (2011: 22)

The lack of tutors and resources…
"may be addressed by resorting to new technologies allowing for the creation of a **virtual learning environment**" to "make training possible irrespective of location or geographical distance between trainers and trainees" (2011: 18)

Whenever appropriate…
"**remote teaching and learning facilities** should be put in place" (2011: 22)

Development of the IVY solution

1. An **adaptive, avatar-based 3D virtual environment** for interpreting students and future users of interpreters

2. A range of **virtual interpreting scenarios** (e.g. 'business meeting') that can be run in different modes: interpreting practice, exploration, learning activity and live interaction mode

3. An environment with **multilingual audio content** for the interpreting scenarios, adapting video corpora from available audiovisual corpora

4. Sets of **learning activities** for interpreter students and future/potential users of interpreters

Information on design and development of the 3D virtual environment can be found at **www.virtual-intepreting.net** and in:
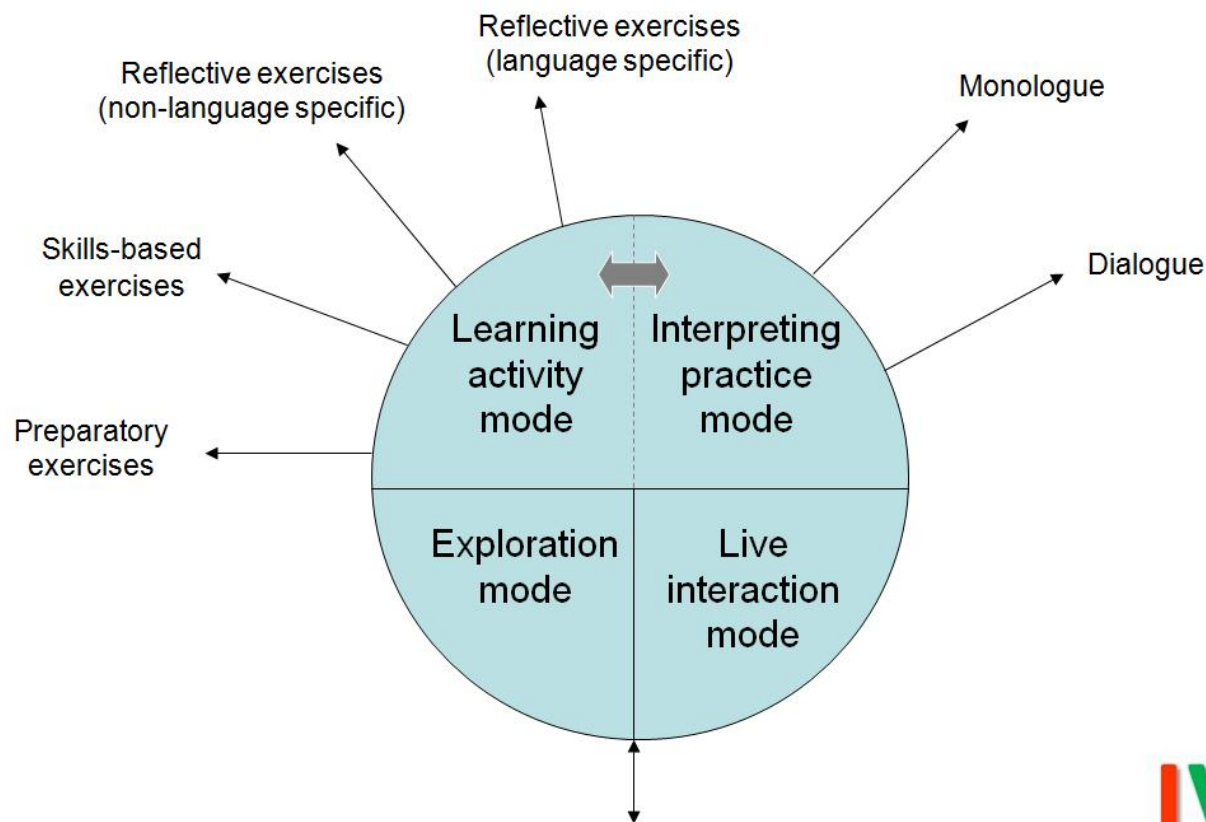
Braun, S, Slater, C, Gittins, R, Ritsos, PD & Roberts, JC (2013) "Interpreting in Virtual Reality: designing and developing a 3D virtual world to prepare interpreters and their clients for professional practice" in D. Kiraly & S. Hansen-Schirra (eds) *New Prospects and Perspectives for Educating Language Mediators.* Tübingen: Narr, 93-120.

Reflective exercises
(language specific)

Reflective exercises
(non-language specific)

Monologue

Skills-based
exercises

Dialogue

Learning
activity
mode

Interpreting
practice
mode

Preparatory
exercises

Exploration
mode

Live
interaction
mode

Enter IVY environment – IVY tutorial

Enter LIFE – SL tutorial

©IVY Project, 2012

Evaluation: Methodology

➢ Evaluation at Surrey:

  ➢ Embedded in the "Applied Interpreting Skills" core module

  ➢ Involved 22 MA students with EL, EN, ES, FR, IT, ZH

  ➢ Started with two induction sessions:

     → Accessing and working in Second Life

     → Working in the IVY virtual environment

  ➢ Comprised self-study period of approx. 8 weeks evaluated via

     → E-diaries kept by students during self-study period

     → Field notes taken at tutorial sessions during self-study period

     → Evaluation questionnaire at end of self-study period

➢ Other evaluation sites at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece (7 students) and Uniwersystet im. Adama Mickiewicza, Poland (18 students)

Findings: Functional evaluation

➢ Access to and functionality of the environment

→ "Steep learning curve" reported in the virtual world pedagogy not wholly realised

→ Importance of technical support in the early stages

➢ Sense of presence and immersion in the environment

→ Some students appreciated the realism of the environment while others found it distracting

I am more concerned about just having good audio control and play functionality instantly available rather than graphics, personalisation, etc.

… I focused on listening to the materials instead of the environment…

[I teleported to the location in SL where the material was set] so as to simulate real interpreting practice between two speakers.

[I] liked the scenarios (presence of people and multiple chairs, etc).

➢ Use and choice of material

→ Students appreciated the range of materials and showed how they chose which materials to work with

> *I used the Bristol monologue because being university-related it sounded like something easy to start with*

> *… it seemed a rather accessible theme and since this was my first training session I felt the need to start with something that would make me feel more comfortable*

> *I practised the dialogue 'Drama at school' from Greek to English because I found it very interesting…*

→ Students made use of the learning activities to varying extents

➢ Development of learning strategies

→ Students developed a degree of systematicity in approach to practice sessions e.g. settings aims and goals, preparing for the interpreting assignment, reflecting on and self-evaluating their performance

> *[My aim was] to focus on active listening, comprehension and also note-taking.*

> *The aim of the practice session was to improve my memory skills and practise two-way consecutive interpreting.*

> *I used one material for at least three times to ensure I can make progress step by step.*

→ BUT students made rather *superficial use* of the environment and did not maximise opportunities for collaborative practice

➢ Consideration of minimum hardware requirements

➢ Need for further guidance in this complex environment

→ More time needed to familiarise students with the augmented capabilities of the 3D virtual environment

→ Further guidance required to promote greater autonomy and systematicity of practice sessions (addressed in the IVY Guidelines and Best Practice)

Next steps

➢ Further research into learning processes needed

➢ From IVY to EVIVA: ***Evaluating the Education of Interpreters and their Clients through Virtual Learning Activities*** (LLP project 2013-14)

→ To evaluate three types of VLE — 3D virtual worlds, videoconference- and video-based environments — in relation to the professional requirements for interpreters and their clients

→ To investigate the learning processes involved in each of these VLEs

→ To acquire a better understanding of how learners work in and with these environments and of the guidance learners require

About IVY and EVIVA

Project partners:

University of Surrey (UK) (*co-ordinator*)

Uniwersystet im. Adama Mickiewicza (Poland)

University of Cyprus (Cyprus)

Steinbeis-Transferzentrum Sprachlernmedien (Germany)

University of Bangor (UK - Wales)

Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen (Germany) (IVY only)

Bar-Ilan University (Israel) (IVY only)

Website: www.virtual-interpreting.net

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