IVY – INTERPRETING IN VIRTUAL REALITY

Report to accompany Deliverable 7.2

IVY dissemination seminar

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1   Introduction

In addition to the dissemination activities carried out throughout the lifetime of the IVY project, a seminar was organised and held at the Kia Oval in London (UK) on Friday, 23 November 2012 to showcase the IVY virtual environment to the wider user community including stakeholders from European interpreter training institutions, interpreter associations, user communities, professional interpreter trainers and the academic researcher community (see Task 7.2). This report provides an overview of the event, focusing on the organisation and audience reached by the seminar, speakers and presentations, and the outcomes of the seminar.

2   Organisation and participation

The seminar that was organised and held was a much larger event than was originally anticipated: the consortium had envisaged 20 participants for the seminar but, given the level of interest in the project, the event attracted 71 registrations, of which 64 people actually attended. The seminar therefore reached over three times the number of people initially targeted. As a result of the increased numbers, an external venue—the Kia Oval, London—was chosen for the seminar.

The seminar was announced on the IVY project website and the announcement was also distributed using email distribution lists (e.g. mailing lists in Translation/Interpreting Studies, partners' distribution lists including contacts to interpreter networks, training institutions, client institutions etc.) and direct emails to in key stakeholder institutions. The seminar was also advertised at relevant dissemination events, such as the IATIS conference held in Belfast in July 2011, which was attended by three members of the IVY consortium.

Figure 1: Screenshot of seminar announcement on the IVY project website

The seminar aimed to attract researchers and developers with an interest in applying ICT to education and training in the field of interpreting, interpreting scholars interested in interpreting pedagogy, representatives of educational and training institutions, interpreter trainers and those who train interpreter clients, and

interpreting service users. These target groups were listed on the seminar announcement in order to attract participants from as many stakeholders as possible. As a result of the advertising, combined with direct contacts and invitations, the seminar was attended by:

- Representatives of the European institutions (European Commission, European Parliament, Court of Justice for the European Union)
- Representatives from professional interpreter associations (e.g. National Register of Public Service Interpreters, Chartered Institute of Linguists)
- Representatives from interpreter client user communities (e.g. London Probation Trust)
- Professional interpreters and interpreting agencies
- Interpreter trainers
- Academics from the teaching and research communities
- Representatives from the interpreter training technologies community

A number of participants belonged to more than one of these stakeholder categories, thereby being able to assess the content of the seminar from a number of different perspectives. There were, for example, participants who were practising interpreters, interpreter trainers and members of interpreter associations.

Figure 2: Participants at the IVY seminar

Figure 3: Seminar Flyer and abstract booklet

3   Speakers and presentations

Although the main aim of the seminar was to disseminate information about the IVY project and its products, it was felt important to situate the IVY project within the broader context of the use of technologies in interpreter training. For this reason, it was decided to devote the majority of the morning sessions to the use of computer technology for the teaching and learning of interpreting and to other initiatives currently using a variety of technologies in the field of interpreter training. The remainder of the morning and the afternoon sessions were devoted to presentations from the IVY consortium and discussion. The presentations given at the seminar (PowerPoint slides and video recording of the presentations) can be accessed via the IVY project website (www.virtual-interpreting.net).

3.1   External speakers

Given her status as a pioneer in the field of Computer-Assisted Interpreter Training (CAIT), Annalisa Sandrelli of LUSPIO University (Italy) was invited to give a historical overview of developments in CAIT and to outline current and future challenges. The aim was to contextualise the other initiatives and the IVY project within a broader context, providing participants with an understanding of the current situation with the uses of ICTs in interpreter training.

Figure 4:Presentation by Annalisa Sandrelli (LUSPIO University)

Claude Durand and Fernando Leitão from the European Commission, DG for Interpretation, then presented two European Commission initiatives that are used to support conference interpreter training, in addition to traditional pedagogical assistance. Mr Durand presented the Virtual Classes initiative, whereby assistance is provided to interpreting students at different European universities via special video conference sessions attended by experienced interpreters at the European Commission and the European Parliament. The interpreters, as 'objective outsiders', can observe and remotely assess the trainee interpreters, thereby giving the trainees an opportunity to perform in front of a panel and understand what is required of them before sitting the accreditation test. One of the main pedagogical benefits of the virtual classes is that the students can demonstrate their skills in a formal setting and

therefore develop their own stress management techniques. A parallel can be drawn here with the realistic simulated scenarios that students can encounter in the IVY environment. The initiative also provides support for the trainers, as there is support from the European Commission and European Parliament assessors and trainers, and speeches from Brussels made by native speakers can be made available in languages that might not be available locally.

Mr Leitão then presented the Speech Repository initiative, stressing that the e-learning tools at the European Commission are used to supplement the traditional teaching given in universities with pedagogical assistance from the Commission. The speeches in the repository are selected to ensure quality and variety for teaching interpreting and are a mixture of 'real' speeches (e.g. debates, press conferences, interviews) and 'pedagogical' speeches prepared by professional interpreters/trainers to be used by learners at different points in learning process. The speeches are arranged by language, given a difficulty grading and accompanied by metadata (e.g. title, description, transcription where available). He also presented the SCICrec interpretation recorder tool which users can use to download a speech, play the audio, record their own interpretation, and then send their interpretation to their trainer for assessment. The Speech Repository and SCICrec tools are used by university teachers, students, and professional interpreters preparing for the AIC test or to add a new language to their portfolio. Mr Leitão also stressed a couple of caveats in using the Speech Repository and SCICrec tools, including the need for students to have guidance when using the speeches. To conclude, the results of a survey exploring the use of the Speech Repository and SCICrec tools between March and May 2011 were presented, and an overview of revisions that will be considered for the future.

What emerged from these presentations is that those involved in designing and implementing the Speech Repository/SCICrec tools had very similar experiences to those working on the IVY environment, including addressing questions relating to the presentation of the materials, whether and how to grade the materials in terms of their difficulty, and the fact that the tools and materials need to be used with pedagogical guidance. This is highly pertinent given one of the key outcomes of the evaluation phase of the IVY environment and materials: a greater level of pedagogical support is required by interpreting students in order to use the environment purposefully and efficiently (see Deliverable 6.3).

The presentations from the European Commission were complemented by two further presentations by Susanne Altenberg and Katerina Dara-Lepoura from the European Parliament, DG for Interpretation and Conferences, who focused on the use of new technologies in the e-learning unit of the DG Interpretation and Conferences, in areas such as cooperation with EU and non-EU universities for training and research, interpreter testing, the Virtual Classes programme, and virtual coaching. Ms Dara-Lepoura presented two types of virtual classes: multipoint virtual classes where three universities are connected to the EU institutions for interpreting practice and feedback, and bilateral virtual classes with one university and the EU institutions. It was also shown that tests will also be recorded rather than live, and that speeches created for tests will be re-used in different tests and will be added to the Speech Repository. This need for resources which can be multi-functional, easily adaptable and localisable was also addressed in the IVY project, thereby showing

that those responsible for the design and implementation of these resources are approaching the task in a similar way.

Susanne Altenberg then presented the current and future needs for training interpreters at the European Parliament. Against a background of a low pass rate for the European Parliament interpreting tests, a need for greater efficiency in the recruitment and testing of interpreters, the busy working lives of European Parliament interpreters, budget cuts, environmental responsibility, and a growing need for new and changing language combinations, Susanne showed the appeal of mobile interpreter training solutions and expressed an interest in exploring and exploiting the opportunities of virtual learning technologies. In addition to the virtual coaching and virtual masterclass initiatives of the European Parliament, she talked about the need for training of virtual assessors (i.e. interpreters trained to assess trainee interpreters) and a desire to expand the blended test coaching, which is required to help bridge the gap between what interpreting students learn at universities and what is required to interpret at the European Parliament. She gave her 'wish-list' for training in the future, including the use of recorded speeches for testing purposes, remote testing and remote diagnostic testing and pre-selection tests.

Figure 5: Presentation by Susanne Altenberg
(DG for Interpretation and Conferences, European Parliament)

Finally, Brooke Townsley from Middlesex University (UK) reported on the EU-funded Building Mutual Trust 2 project. Following on from the paper-based outcomes of the Building Mutual Trust 1 project, the project aims to use digital editing technologies, video streaming and the internet to deliver interactive online materials for legal professionals working with interpreters. The guiding principles of creating a model that is user focused, easy to access and suitable for localisation into other languages were stated, showing that there is a commonality in these principles with other initiatives and projects using current and emerging technologies for delivering interpreter and interpretation training. Screenshots of video clips showed monolingual communication in the first instance, with a view to showing how the communication changes when the interpreter is introduced to the situation. Mr Townsley concluded his presentation by reflecting on the options made possible by easy web access which could enable all users—not just interpreters, trainers, clients or service providers—to use the model to learn about communicating in interpreter-mediated communication in the future.

The aim of inviting other speakers to the seminar was to show where and how the IVY project can be situated within other initiatives and to exchange ideas about best practice and the usability and feasibility of the different technologies used. What emerged was that there was very often common ground in the design and implementation of the platforms and resources, and that training needs go beyond the interpreting students themselves, encompassing trainers, users of interpreting services and beyond.

3.2 Presentations by members of the IVY consortium

Following these presentations, members of the IVY consortium presented different aspects of the IVY project. The different partner presentations were discussed and decided upon at the fourth project meeting, where it was decided that the partner who had led or significantly contributed to a particular aspect of the project or its products/processes would present that aspect at the seminar.

Figure 6: IVY Consortium presentation by Bangor University (L-R: Robert Gittins, Panagiotis D. Ritsos, Jonathan C. Roberts; chair (far right) Georgios Floros, University of Cyprus)

The presentations focused on the technical development and implementation of the 3D environment (Bangor), the development of the IVY learning content (Petra Hoffstaedter [StC] and Kurt Kohn [EKUT]), the new IVY corpora (Tanya Voinova [BL] and Konstantinos Kritsis [UCY]), and the learning activities for trainee interpreters and clients of interpreting services (Sabine Braun and Catherine Slater [SUR]). Before the IVY pedagogical evaluation presentation, Richard Bale, a PhD student at the University of Surrey, presented an evaluation of the multimedia corpora. His research makes use of the BACKBONE corpora[1] on which the IVY content was based and it was felt helpful to have additional input on the contribution such multimedia corpora can have on interpreter training in their 'raw' state before they were transformed into the IVY monologues and dialogues. The pedagogical evaluation of the IVY environment was then presented (Maria Tymczyńska and

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[1] EU project BACKBONE [Pedagogic Corpora for Content & Language Integrated Learning], EU Lifelong Learning Programme, Project number 143502-LLP-1-2008-1-DE-KA2-KA2MP, 2009-2011.

Marta Kajzer-Wietrzny [UAM]). The aim of these presentations was to highlight all the different phases of development and to tease out the challenges inherent in creating a rich and pedagogically viable 3D training resource, the decisions taken, and the solutions chosen to make the environment and its content as usable and as pedagogically suitable as possible.
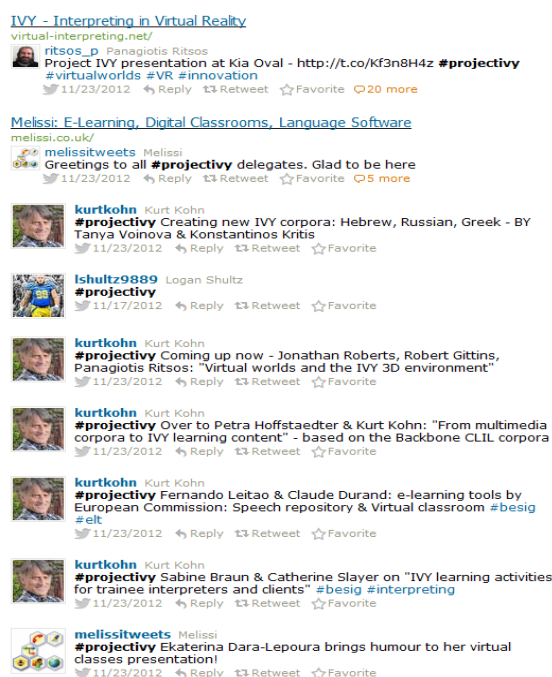
3.3 Discussion panel

The final session of the day was devoted to a discussion panel. All of the external speakers were asked to sit on the panel, together with representatives from the IVY consortium (Sabine Braun, Robert Gittins, Kurt Kohn and Maria Tymczyńska). One key area that was discussed was the question of evaluation and assessment, particularly learning in e-learning contexts and how this evaluation could or should be carried out. Mr Durand argued that the validity and efficiency of self-training in virtual training environments could be assessed by using students from two different universities where one group had access to the virtual training environment and one did not, and then the results from the final examination could be compared. This could be used to draw conclusions about student progress with a virtual training component versus a more traditional learning path. Kurt Kohn, however, argued that it was not a matter of whether learning was better with or without e- or virtual learning but rather that there was a need to understand more about which activities work well as e- or virtual learning activities and to find out the pros and cons of each individual type of activity and then blend the activities appropriately. The issue of assessment and evaluation of training methods is the focus of the new EU-funded EVIVA[2] project which will explore methods for evaluating training with e-learning or blended learning solutions (namely interpreter and client training in the IVY environment, video-based training and videoconference-based training).

3.4 Use of social media

Acknowledging the groing importance of social media to raise awareness for the project's work and aims, the IVY seminar was also advertised at project partners's LinkedIn sites.

On the day of the event, the seminar itself was was accompanied by a Twitter feed (#projectivy) where the project partners provided short updates on the various presentations and reported on the event throughout the day.

Figure 7: IVY seminar Twitter feed

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4 Outcomes and future dialogue

Outcomes from the dissemination seminar can be broadly categorised into content outcomes and opportunities for future dissemination/collaboration. In terms of content, it was interesting to hear that other initiatives had had similar experiences in terms of designing and implementing e-learning solutions in interpreter training. This ranged from similar user needs (e.g. the need for mobile solutions) to the idea of creating resources which are flexible and localisable (e.g. creating a platform to which new content can easily and quickly be added, creating a template for resources that can easily and quickly be adapted for other languages or other language combinations). These were guiding principles in the IVY project and the fact that other initiatives were working with similar principles and experiences validated and gave credence to the IVY approach.

In addition, it became clear during the seminar that there is still a lack of interest from the users/clients of interpreting services or public service providers in terms of learning about working with an interpreter. Susanne Altenberg, for example, mentioned how difficult it is to engage Members of the European Parliament in learning about the service that interpreters provide. Despite a number of approaches (the paper-based 'Golden Rules', social/personal interaction), it is clear that further work needs to be done to determine a) why there is this lack of engagement and b) what can be done to engage clients and PSPs. Online learning/information tools may be one solution.

The seminar also highlighted that further work needs to be done in the area of evaluating these e-learning platforms and resources. While the time and energy has so far been invested in the design and implementation of these solutions—which is of course a necessary step—the fact remains that we are yet to know how successful these resources are for teaching and learning purposes. The presentation given by the IVY consortium on the initial evaluation phase of the project and the presentation by Richard Bale showed that a start has been made on evaluating these resources and indicated methodologies that can be used for doing so. Again, this will be the focus of the EVIVA project (see above) and this outcome from the seminar reinforced the need for further development and research work in this area.

In terms of further collaboration/dissemination opportunities, an article reporting on the IVY project and the dissemination seminar is also being published in the UK's Chartered Institute of Linguists' professional magazine *The Linguist*. This publication is a bi-monthly magazine which is distributed to all members of the CIoL and which has an ever-increasing number of non-member subscribers. The article in this magazine is designed to raise awareness of the IVY project to a number of the project's key demographic, namely students, interpreter trainers and professional interpreters.

One of the key outcomes of the seminar, however, was the links that were forged with the European institutions and the recognition of shared goals regarding interpreter training. The seminar served to raise awareness among the European institutions about the possibilities of using virtual worlds for interpreter training. The interest from the European Commission has been concretised by an invitation to Sabine Braun to present the IVY project and its use of a 3D virtual world for

interpreter training at the SCIC-Universities conference (Brussels, March 2013), i.e. the annual conference of interpreter training institutions in Europe, organised by the DG Interpreting of the European Commission. The theme of the 2013 conference is "New modes of learning" and the event will be attended by approximately 160 participants mainly from the EU but with some participants coming from outside Europe. The IVY presentation will be featured as an example of efforts in Europe to research and implement the use of advanced technologies in interpreter training. It will be an excellent opportunity to disseminate the IVY project after the official end of the project lifetime, in line with the project's Exploitation Strategy of Mainstreaming the project results among key stakeholders.

5 List of supporting documentation and materials

The following documents are available in PDF format:

- Seminar advertisement
- Seminar agenda
- Abstract booklet
- Signed participant list
- Article published in the Chartered Institute of Linguists' in-house magazine *The Linguist*

Videos of the presentations and the PowerPoint slides can be accessed via the project website (www.virtual-interpreting.net) and are reproduced with the speakers' permissions.