Respeaking as a part of translation and interpreting curriculum?

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What is respeaking?

- Respeaking (AKA ‘voice writing’ in the US)
  - Speech recognition-based subtitling

A speaker speaks a text

Respeaker respeaks/ translates the text

Speech recognition software transforms the utterance from speech to text

Respeaker/ Editor corrects any errors

Respeaker/ Editor releases a subtitle to be displayed on screen
Types of respeaking

- **Intralingual** (eg. English to English, Polish to Polish)
  - Target audience: the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing
- **Interlingual** (eg. English to Polish)
Respeaking competence
Ideal respeaker – competence overlap?

- 'The ideal person for the job would be someone who is a qualified interpreter and a professional subtitler' (den Boer 2001)
- 'VRT1 is now experimenting with interpreters and they are finding that they do a much better job' (Remael & Van der Veer, 2006)
Respeaking vs. Interpreting skills

- Respeaking – a form of ‘intralingual simultaneous interpreting’ (Romero Fresco 2012: 99)
- Interlingual respeaking is a hybrid form of interpreting
  - similar process, different product: spoken interpretation vs. subtitles
- Skills
  - Preparation
  - Listening, analysis & reformulation
  - Multitasking
  - Delivery
- ‘Respeakers may have to unlearn certain interpreting skills, such as the ability to speak in a pleasant tone’ (Romero Fresco 2012: 100)
Respeaking vs. Subtitling skills

□ Skills
  – Subtitling and SR software
  – Awareness of spatial and temporal constraints
  – Awareness of the target audience
Teaching respeaking at university level
First respeaking course – University of Antwerp

- 'We have been looking into what we have at our department for translation and interpreting, and what we need in addition. We already have an interpreting section, where students acquire a number of skills: listening and comprehension skills, memory training, oral skills, acquisition of specialised vocabulary, organisation of your documentation and databases, specific reproductive interpreting skills. We believe that all these interpreting skills will be useful for future respeakers as well' (Remael & Van der Veer, 2006)
Belgium

- **University of Antwerp**
  - Respeaking taught as an elective (students choose 2 out of 3) in MA in Interpreting
  - Most students also take Subtitling as an elective, or have done Master in Translation (which includes AVT)
  - Face-to-face
  - Software: Dragon, Word, and Qu4ntum (Screen Systems)
  - 52 contact hours, 6 ECTS
  - About 8 students annually
  - The course ends with 1-2 week training at VTM, commercial broadcaster. Some students get a competitive one-month internship at VRT (public broadcaster)
  - Mostly intralingual, with 1-2 weeks of interlingual respeaking training
Spain

- **UAB**
  - part of an ‘official’ MA programme
  - face-to-face: 8 contact hours of respeaking as part of a bigger module on AVT

- **Vigo**
  - Taught as an introduction within the SDH/subtitling module of the MA in Multimedia Translation
  - Partly online, partly face-to-face
  - Soon: module on intra- and interlingual respeaking (the latter shared with the MA in Interpreting)
Switzerland and Germany

- **School of Applied Linguistics** (Zurich University of Applied Sciences, ZHAW)
  - Respeaking is part of a possible specialisation in Multimodal Communication within the BA in Applied Languages, and as of 2016 – as part of MA
  
  [https://www.zhaw.ch/en/linguistics/study/ba-in-applied-languages/#c33688](https://www.zhaw.ch/en/linguistics/study/ba-in-applied-languages/#c33688)

- **Germany**
  - Certificate courses, not part of BA/MA at university
United Kingdom

- **University of Roehampton**
  - 3-month accessibility module
    - Optional module in the MA in AVT
    - Compulsory module in the MA in Accessibility and Filmmaking
  - Initially non-language-specific content in English and then respeaking in English, Spanish, French, Italian and German (with Dragon).
  - Mostly intralingual but one or two final weeks interlingual, into their mother tongue.
United Kingdom

- **University of Leeds**
  - Obligatory course on speech recognition as a part of MA in AVT, MA in Conference Interpreting and Translations Studies, MA in Applied Translation Studies
  - Masterclass in respeaking
  - 10 hours of face-to-face followed by student practice
Respeaking in Poland
Respeaking in Poland

- No university training
- Television
  - No live subtitling on TV
  - Semi-live subtitling with QWERTY
- Live events
  - Conferences
    - On-site
    - Online streaming
Respeaking project (2014-2017)

- 'Respeaking – process, competences, quality'
- Goal: to examine the competences of respeakers
- Research question: Are interpreters better respeakers?
- Three groups of participants
  - Interpreters and interpreting trainees
  - Translators and translation trainees
  - Control group (no interpreting/translation background)
Respeaking training

- No professional respeakers to test
- Respeaking training
  - Four two-day workshops (February - May 2015)
  - Pablo Romero Fresco, Carlo Eugeni, Juan Martinez
- Respeaking test and interview with participants
Feedback forms (1) - What have you learnt during the course?

- 'the basics of respeaking'
- 'how to use SR software and subtitling software'
- 'this new profession I haven’t heard of before'
- 'control my intonation'
- 'check the quality of the subtitles I create'
- 'multitasking skills'
- 'I know what exercises to do to improve my concentration'
- 'how to modify my interpreting skills for the needs of respeaking', 'how to minimize hesitations and fall starts'
- 'I realised that speaking to a computer is different from speaking to a human being and you have to be express yourself clearly'
- 'I discovered that there could be something even more complex than interpreting'
Feedback forms (2) – What haven’t you learnt though you wanted to?

- ‘the right intonation, breathing, avoiding inarticulate noises'
- ‘to make the software understand me'
- ‘control the intonation and pronunciation when I’m under stress'
- ‘I learnt everything that I wanted but it’s a pity I can’t continue the course to learn more'
- ‘not enough attention was paid to interlingual respeaking'
- ‘I had technical problems on the second day and I couldn’t participate fully'
- ‘hard to say, it was all new for me'
- ‘I didn’t have any expectations, so I’m satisfied'
Feedback forms (3) – Suggestions for the future

- 'this course could be included in the list of electives in the MA programme'
- 'respeaking could be a separate course at the University'
- 'the course should be longer', 'the course was overloaded with content and too rushed'
- 'more individual feedback' vs. 'I didn’t like the fact that trainers were looking at my screen and watching me doing respeaking, that was extremely stressfull'
- 'smaller groups', 'working in interpreting booths'
- 'the parts on errors in respeaking and the NER was too complex, I didn’t understand much and it wasn’t very useful for me as a beginner'
- 'since respeakers work in teams I’d like to try working with a moderator'
Post-test survey

- Would you like to take part in the continuation of the respeaking course?
  - 45 out of 50: YES
  - 4: DON’T KNOW
  - 1: NO

- What do you think you need to work on?
  - Clear enunciation
  - Memory skills
  - Paraphrasing the text
  - Dictating punctuation marks
  - Multitasking: listening and speaking at the same time
Teaching respeaking at University

- MA programme – obligatory or elective?
- Prerequisites: Interpreting & Subtitling modules
- Infrastructure: booths or computers?
- Interpreters and translators need a separate course
- One semester (30 contact hours, plus self-study)
  - Technical problems with independent practice
  - Software licences (we have Newton, but only two licences of FAB Subtitler Live)
  - Screenrecording with audio – individual feedback
So what?

- Growing demand for respeaking
- Students of audiovisual translation or interpreting have already acquired many of the necessary skills and are in the best position to receive respeaking training
- Students want to have such a course and respond enthusiastically to the training
- Respeaking training can benefit students in their interpreting and translation work
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