Adding diversity, interactivity, and flexibility to interpreter training through a 3-D virtual environment: ÇEV-VİR Project

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Integration of information and communication technologies in interpreter training has become of key importance in the recent decades, as widely recognized in the literature on practice and teaching of interpreting. Taking into account the diversity of real-life interpreting contexts and situations, both in conference and public service settings, university interpreter training should ideally aim at preparing novice interpreters for as many different situations as possible, and equip them with the skills required. However, this task is hampered by the lack of authentic material in different subject fields, and language combinations, as well as lack of classroom and/or laboratory practice time. Thus, innovative pedagogic approaches supporting self-directed technology-enhanced study and practice are potential solutions for both interpreter trainers and trainees.

Considering the scarcity of resources in interpreting, especially in Turkish, we have created a virtual learning environment. This contains a built-in corpora of dialogues, speeches, and presentations at various levels of difficulty in different fields for the practice of simultaneous and consecutive interpreting. As part of a two-year scientific research project funded by TÜBİTAK, the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (Grant No: 114K718), we are in the process of constructing a user-friendly virtual environment that will facilitate interpreter training. This allows novice interpreters to practice scenarios prepared for different modes of interpreting in a highly customized virtual world - Second Life (SL). The focus of the presentation will be the potential advantages and disadvantages of teaching interpreting in a virtual world. The rationale for and the pedagogical value of using SL in interpreter training will serve as a departure point in this paper. The discussion will provide insights into the ways in which this learning environment can complement face-to-face learning, and examine approaches to integrating it into curriculum design. There will also be discussion of challenges likely to arise during the implementation, based on the first-hand experience acquired in this project.