

Automatic transcript of speeches, now under experiment also for court reports.

The possibility of getting an automatic transcript of speeches was announced at the Congress in Wien 2005, and the forecast was to have it available in about 10 years time. Several improvements in software and hardware have reduced this deadline and have speeded up researches in several languages. Information about the automatic transcript at the Japanese Diet were released at the Congress in Beijing by Prof. Tatsuya Kawahara of the Kyoto University as well as Dottor Gianni Lazzari and other co-workers of the Research Institute in Trento (Italy) explained the transcription systems available via Internet. These reports are available at www.intersteno.org (Scientific Committee). Several experiments are done in many countries (France - Germany - USA) and Google made available this feature in November last for English language. A few days ago an information was released that experiments will be done in several Courts all over Italy, using automatic transcript for generating a first draft of a court report. The software process is a batch one (i.e. not in realtime at the moment) and at the end the draft is released in .pdf format with links to the audio recording. Using a specific tool, the draft will be checked and revised by the staff of the firm which now ensures reports in this Court. The technology used is the same indicated in the report at the Congress of Beijing. The purpose of this document is not to evaluate this technology, everybody of you knows that a good report is not the simple transcript of word by word, the same like automatic translation is not a good translation, but it helps a lot. Whether an automatic transcript will help in delivering a good report with reduced time and efforts has to be widely investigated, information is not yet available in a reliable way, but we must include in this evaluation the human abilities for fulfilling this task. Once again it is a matter of improving the skills needed in connection with technology, creating new reporters or 'up-dating' the ones already working. It's a big challenge and at the same time a big opportunity. Intersteno could help in preparing a learning path to this effect, taking into account, for example, the international experiences of text correction competition. This formula must be better evaluated and revised in order to meet the new needs of revising a text automatically produced from speech. In my opinion we could also integrate the experience of word-processing competition, since there will be a bigger demand of tagging various information at the very first step of the reporting process, in order to avoid additional reworking.

Gian Paolo Trivulzio September 2010

Additional info and comments of Prof. Tatsuya Kawara member of the Education Committee

Please also be advised that automatic transcript of speeches is also being introduced to Japanese courts from last year, but we do not know how (whether) it is usable. They do not allow to disclose any information in the name of confidentiality.

I totally agree with your comments that a good report is not a simple transcript of word by word, and we should share the experiences.

A dedicated speech recognition software was developed by NEC

Corporation. It is not intended for respeaking, but for directly transcribing audio, so commercial dictation software will not work, as in the case of the Parliament.

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