Developing Next Generation Open Courseware for English-Japanese Interpretation Training

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Summary
This paper reports on a project that aims to develop an online open courseware for English-Japanese interpretation training at university. The main module of the courseware consists of four parts: Part 1 Language Enhancement Exercises, Part 2 Introduction to Simultaneous Interpreting, and Part 4 Lectures in Interpreting and Translation Theories.

The courseware is also accompanied by Interpreter Training Online Database which currently contains about 20 GB of video and audio training materials that can be accessed at anytime by authorized users via the Internet. The database is for advanced students and constitutes Module 2 of the courseware.

As far as we know, the proposed courseware is the only full-fledged open courseware for interpretation training in the language pair of English and Japanese as of today. The courseware comes with an easy-to-use original media player/recorder to assist students with their practice in simultaneous and consecutive interpreting. We believe that both students and instructors around the world will find the courseware useful, and hope that it will help bridge the gaps between theory and practice in this important area of pedagogy.

Module 1 Program Sequence and Objectives
Figs 3 and 4 show recommended program sequences and objectives of the SI and CI sub-modules respectively. The materials are arranged in such a way that their task complexity and cognitive demands are gradually increased as students proceed.

Module 2 Interpreter Training Online Database
Figs 5 and 6 show the topography of the Interpreter Training Online Database (Module 2) and the index (i.e. table of contents) page thereof respectively.

Advanced Technical Features
The courseware is equipped with many new features including an interactive BBS where students can ask questions or exchange their views with classmates, online exam (i.e. profficieny test) pages, and a JAVA-based built-in voice recorder (Fig. 7). We also have developed a stand-alone digital player/recorder (Fig. 8), with which students can practice both SI and CI without requiring other expensive equipment or special classroom environment such as a CALL system or an interpreter’s booth.

Network and Accessibility
The courseware, which is currently password protected and stored in KU’s contents server (Fig. 9), has been in use in both undergraduate and graduate interpreting courses at Kansai University. Osaka, Japan via the KU’s intranet system. The courseware, or at least a major portion of it, however, will be made available as Open Courseware to other institutions and students learning interpreting via the Internet as soon as some of the technical as well as copyright problems are cleared.

Future Prospects
The courseware (Modules 1 and 2) is already in operation, but some more time is needed until we can put it in the public domain for free access worldwide. We are hoping to do so by the end of 2015 or earlier. In the meantime, interested users can access a portion of the program under a special licence agreement. We are also planning to import the current courseware to other language pairs such as Japanese/Chinese, Japanese/Korean, Japanese/Spanish and so on, using the same theoretical framework on which the current system is based. The development of trilingual courseware (i.e. J.E.E. Plus One) is also being discussed.

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