

## **LTA – Ricio and Pilar interview**

Francesca Raffi (FR): Francesca Raffi for Fred Film Radio. Today we are going to talk about accessibility and training. More precisely, we are going to know more about a European project which aim is to train real-time subtitlers across Europe, the Live Text Access project. So, to know more about this, we have virtually with us today the project coordinator Rocío Bernabé Caro, Deputy Head of the Professional College of Translation and Interpreting of the SDI in Munich, Germany, and tenured lecturer at the SDI University of Applied Languages. She's also a member of the TransMedia Catalonia research group. We also have with us today Pilar Orero, one of the partners of the project, full professor of audiovisual translation at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, where she also leads the TransMedia Catalonia research group. Rocío and Pilar thank you very much for being with us today.

Rocío Bernabé (RB) and Pilar Orero (PO): Thank you.

FR: I understand that you share various research interests and activities: TransMedia Catalonia, the LTA project.... Could you please tell us more about yourselves? Rocío, how did you become so involved in media accessibility?

RB: I actually studied translation a long time ago in Spain. Five years ago I decided to do a master's degree in accessible technology, documents and applications. That's actually how I got to meet Pilar. We have a common business partner and friend and he got us together. I was interested in doing a Ph.D as well in the field of audiovisual translation, in easy-to-read, and since she's really the person who knows more in the world about everything in audiovisual translation...

FR: You're right.

RB: I was lucky to meet her, and that's actually how we started working together.

FR: Pilar, your works are some of the most widely cited publications in the field of media accessibility, of which you're one of the funding scholars, so why did you decided to deal with media accessibility issues?

PO: It all started with me being a translator. I used to live in Manchester and I was translating for the BBC and a private channel called Granada Television. From there I started working as a translator for them, for television I mean. Then, I worked for seven years in Spain being a ghostwriter for a TV program.

FR: That's interesting.

PO: Yeah, 7 years writing one of the most popular television programs in Spain. Then I took that from paid job in the university, as one of the specialities. Then, the issue came up with the subtitles, then subtitles for the deaf, and then... That's where we are. We're just trying to incorporate. This is something difficult from the research

group that I no longer lead. Now Anna Matamala is the leader. We try to bring industrial processes into the university. Because the university is always behind what goes on in technology. So it was subtitling, subtitling for the deaf, then audio description. Then Rocío brought in something that we were very far away from at the university and that was easy-to-read. She specialised in that and I thought, “Wow, this is a fantastic service that we haven't started implementing and studying properly in universities.” In fact, she is the first in university... There is someone in Germany working in easy-to-read, but not as an accessibility service.

FR: Service, OK.

PO: Just as a linguistic process. Rocío is the first person in the world that I know...

FR: Wow, that's great.

PO: She's fantastic, because she's made the connection between easy-to-read as a distinct language, perhaps, and easy-to-read as an accessibility service. It also can be applied to subtitling, audio description, and anything that you can write or hear after being written.

FR: Now, you are currently working together on the LTA project which stands for Live Text Access, right?

RB & PO: Right.

FR: Rocío, what is Live Text Access first of all, and what are the main objectives of this project?

RB: Our project is all about real-time intralingual subtitling. About the provision of the service. I mean, the main aim of the project is to create training materials for training real-time intralingual subtitlers. The thing is, at the moment the situation in Europe is that you have the legislation, you have the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, you have the Audiovisual Media Services Directive, the Accessibility Act, you have all this legislation triggering actually to provide services. You see the market and you have the providers providing the services, the subtitling. You have the educational sector, which is actually creating training and training professionals, but you have the users as well and the users are saying that the quality of the service that is being provided at the moment is not regular enough or good enough.

FR: It's not good enough.

RB: That's where why we get into action. We said, “We can get together, put the industry together, the service providers, the education as well in the project and create teaching materials for training good real-time intralingual subtitlers.” That's actually how everything started. I must say that wasn't my idea. Pilar has to take credit for this

one. She was the one who started, initiated actually... Yes, it was you.

PO: OK, it was me, but you need a seed and you planted the seed. I mean, I would have never come up with the idea of easy-to-read subtitles, or easy-to-listen audio descriptions. It happened because Rocío made a dissertation on easy-to-read. That's true.

FR: How can we define easy-to-read?

RB: Easy-to read is just a way of writing that is simplified for people who don't really have access to information, because it is written in a very complicated way. It may be because you're using specialised terminology, or the sentences are far too complicated, far too long. At the very second when you say, "This is too complicated, we want to make it easier", is when you start creating easy-to-understand content.

FR: Contents...

RB: It can be plain language, or easy-to-read actually. Easy-to-read is a set of guidelines that tell you how to implement information. How to write it in order to make it easier to understand.

FR: So, the project will basically harmonise the professional profile of real-time subtitlers across Europe and create open source training materials, is it correct?

RB: Yes, we are an Erasmus project and all the materials and documents that are created have to be open source and accessible for everybody. That's one of the goals, of course.

FR: Pilar, when did the project start? What is its duration and also its main steps in general?

PO: OK, the project started many months ago when we started writing it and thinking about it. So, in fact, many many months ago, but the truth is that the project officially started last year, 1 September 2018. It runs for 36 months. So, three years.

FR: Three years.

PO: The main steps are the logical steps. First of all, we have to understand what is going... How it is done across Europe, because Europe is a fantastic place with many languages and languages have different characteristics. Some of them are minority languages, some are official languages. So, first of all we have to understand how it is done. Is that the same everywhere? So, we have to make a photograph of what's going on. Once you understand that, then we're going to create something called skills... We're going to identify the skills.

FR: OK.

PO: And that is nice because is like a coin. To be a trained person, you need to have these skills. And these skills can be applied to any language, because if we say, “You need to do this”, and this is not good for that language or for that situation, then it's not very European. So, it's a good idea to have skills, rather than content. Once we have the skills defined, then we will generate content for the skills. It will be a very flexible way of generating content. A very flexible way to generate... At the end of the day, if you want you can attend a course or a master, or a one-day course, because you can pick up a little bit of skills, or focused skills. It's a very flexible...

FR: Flexible. That's interesting. So, there will be different steps. Speaking of steps, I have here with me actually a short description of the project and I see that on your agenda there is the completion of, and I'm quoting, “every intellectual output”. This terminology is used in the Erasmus+ Program, right?

RB: That's true.

FR: Can you tell us more about this, Rocío?

RB: Yeah, these intellectual outputs... They're just work packages. It's the European... I don't know how they came out with this term. Intellectual outputs are work packages. So, like any other project you have milestones and they're usually linked to a work package. In our case we have five. As Pilar was saying, they're building up on each other. The first thing we have to do is to define the skills and competences do the respeakers and velotypists, those are the two profile we're working with, need to have to deliver good quality. So, once we have that, we'll have the skills card that you can imagine is like a table where all the skills are just put together making this picture Pilar was talking about. That's the first Intellectual Output, or work package. We will move on creating and designing the curriculum. That's IO2, or Intellectual Output 2. And of course the next step will be IO3, which is creating the materials. We're going to have open source materials. It' going to be digital, it's going to be... We have to see. I mean, it will probably have everything, from single documents up to videos and study cases.

FR: In various formats, let's say.

RB: Yes. Then we have work package four, or Intellectual Output 4, and Barcelona is leading that one. We're going to create a pilot course to test it.

FR: OK.

RB: We have to get the users involved. It's a user centered approach involving the users. We already have people interested in taking part in the pilot course. So they will be analysing how good is the design, how good are the materials...

FR: How many people will you have roughly?

RB: I don't know. We'll have to see. I think like 20 people, 25 people. Pilar what do you say? What's a good number?

PO: I think that's a good number.

RB: Something like that, because we have to cope with the amount of data...

FR: Yes, of course.

RB: So it has to be something like that. Our last intellectual output is certification. Certification... I mean, Pilar can say more about this. The certification work package started at the very first day, because we actually said, "We are not going to create something and say it's good just because we did it". We wanted to have an external quality partner, who can really have an eye on keeping the quality high and harmonise descriptions. Descriptions that are going to be turned into learning outcomes, into credits that can be used at the universities and ECTS for vocational training. And of course having a certification agency as a partner is a way of creating sustainability and visibility.

FR: Of course.

RB: It is not just about working together three years and delivering. It's about making sure that everybody can profit on the long run from the results. That's our fifth intellectual output.

FR: A very exciting and huge project. I understand from what you have just said that the LTA project sees accessibility like a kind of fundamental human right. Pilar?

PO: It is. We live in a society where access to the Internet and access to media and audiovisual content is basic. If you want to do any... I don't know where you live, but if you want to do any paperwork, or have any democratic participation in society these days, it is done through the Internet. If you don't have an Internet connection and you don't have access to the Internet... At university we teach with audiovisual material. We no longer teach with just paper and a pen. So I think that if people can't have access to this content, they are basically out of society. So, they are excluded from society.

FR: Excluded.

PO: That's not only my point of view. That the UN point of view.

FR: Yeah, that's true. That's true.

PO: Basically we have to integrate everybody. Most people can be integrated very easily, but some people can't, because they have one problem or another. You may not have a finger to press the button to switch up on your Internet. Or you may have

no Internet connection. Or you may be blind and don't have access to the audiovisual. So, there are many issues. Maybe you speak a different language that's spoken where you are. If you put me in Japan, I can't read and I can't hear. I don't understand. So, in Japan I need a lot of accessibility. So... We need to make sure everybody can communicate, because communication to me is what differentiates us, verbal communication, from animals.

FR: From animals, yeah.

PO: We have to be able to communicate. Otherwise is solitude and that's horrible. That's the idea. We want people to communicate.

FR: Very clear. Thank you very much Rocío and Pilar. Thank you very much. This project is really exciting. The information generated will certainly improve not only real-time subtitling, but also more broadly the field of media accessibility, I think. So, thank you very much for being with us today.

RB & PO: Thank you.

FR: And thank you very much to all of you. If you want to know more about the LTA project, stay with us and visit Fred's website, because we will be back soon with new guests, who will tell us more about the LTA project. This is Francesca Raffi, and this is Fred Film Radio, the festival insider.

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