

Live subtitlers: who are they?

Dr Isabelle Robert, Dr Aline Remael and Ella Diels
TricS, University of Antwerp

**6th INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM
ON ACCESSIBILITY AND LIVE SUBTITLING:**

**Civica Scuola Interpreti e Traduttori "Altiero Spinelli",
Milan - September 14, 2018**



Introduction: context

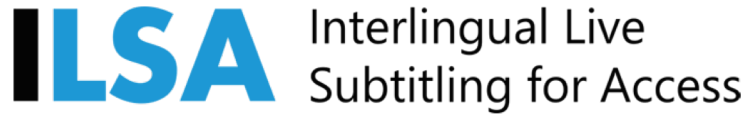
PAST

- Respeaking with SR for producing live inTRAlingual subtitles introduced in 2001 in Europe, now preferred technique in most contexts
- At the time, no training → different practices

PRESENT

- New challenge: need for inTERlingual live subtitles → training? Competences? → ILSA Erasmus+ Project

Introduction: ILSA



- **ILSA** = Interlingual **L**ive **S**ubtitling for **A**ccess
- September 2017-August 2020
- Team:
 - Pablo Romero Fresco, ILSA project leader, **University of Vigo**
 - Luis Alonso, Ana Pereira and Lourdes Lorenzo, ILSA researchers, University of Vigo
 - Isabelle Robert, Aline Remael, Iris Schrijver, ILSA researchers, **University of Antwerp**
 - Wojciech Figiel, Agnieszka Szarkowska and Łukasz Dutka, ILSA researchers, **University of Warsaw**
 - Franz Pöchhacker, ILSA researcher, **University of Vienna**

Introduction: ILSA

- Aim: the main priority of ILSA is to develop the new professional profile of the ILSer. This includes
 - an assessment of current intralingual and interlingual live subtitling practice and training (IO1), on which ILSA will build;
 - the identification of the subtitling, interpreting and respeaking skills required for the job (IO2 and IO3);
 - the development, assessment and validation of a specialized course and its materials (IO4, IO5, IO6 and IO7);
 - and the creation of a protocol to transfer the results of the project to society (IO7) for the implementation of ILS on TV, in the classroom and in social/political settings.

Research question

How about the current training and practice of intra- and interlingual live subtitlers? (=IO1)

In other words, who are today's live subtitlers?

Methodology

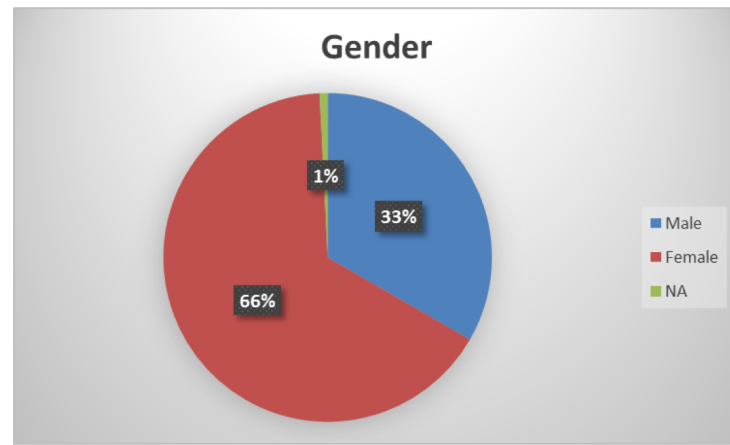
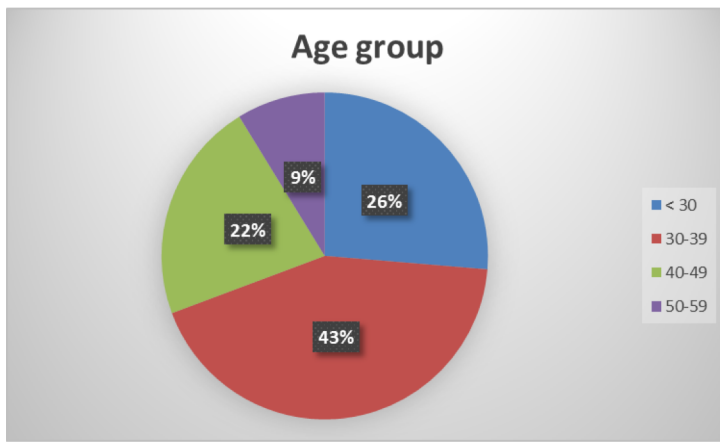
- Comprehensive online questionnaire conducted in the spring of 2018 and sent to four target groups: Higher Education Institutions (HEI), **practitioners** (intralingual and interlingual live subtitlers, LS and ILS), broadcasters and service providers.
- Survey designed by Ella Diels (Master student UAntwerp) together with all partners, in different rounds of feedback
- Dissemination by all partners to more than 80 potential respondents

Methodology

- Survey design: 3 blocks
 - Demographics: age, gender, country, L1, education, function
 - Intralingual Live Subtitling (1) and/or Interlingual Live Subtitling (2):
 - Practice: setting (tv, etc.), hours/week
 - Training: type and timing, aptitude tests, training delivery type, assessment, accuracy rate, etc.
 - Training quality perception, superfluous and missing competences, perception of importance of formal training and/or experience in different disciplines

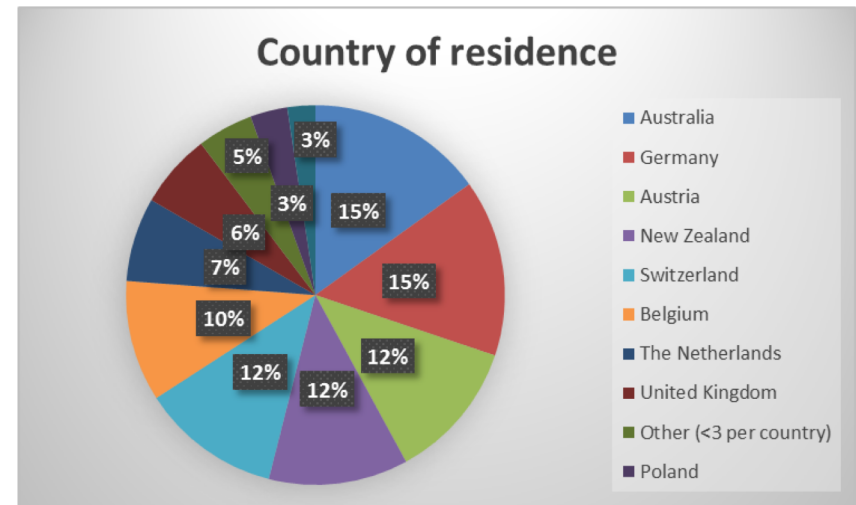
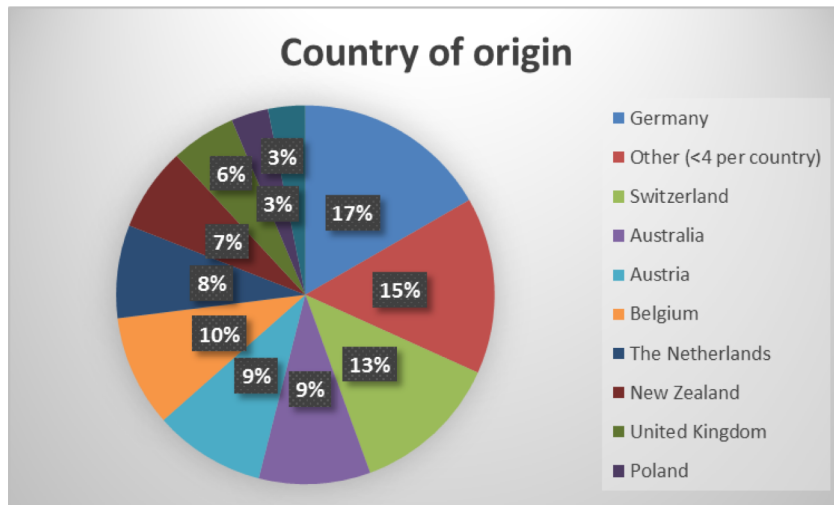
Results: demographics

126 answers, but not every respondent answered all questions → some results are based on fewer answers



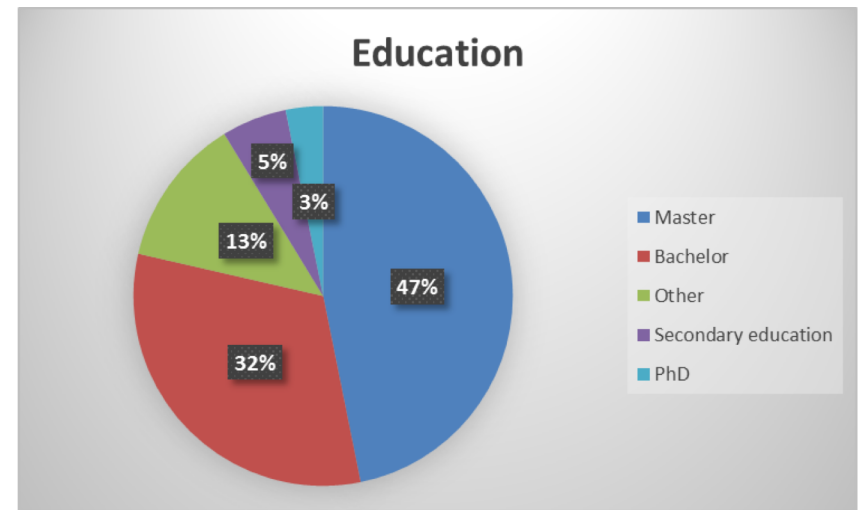
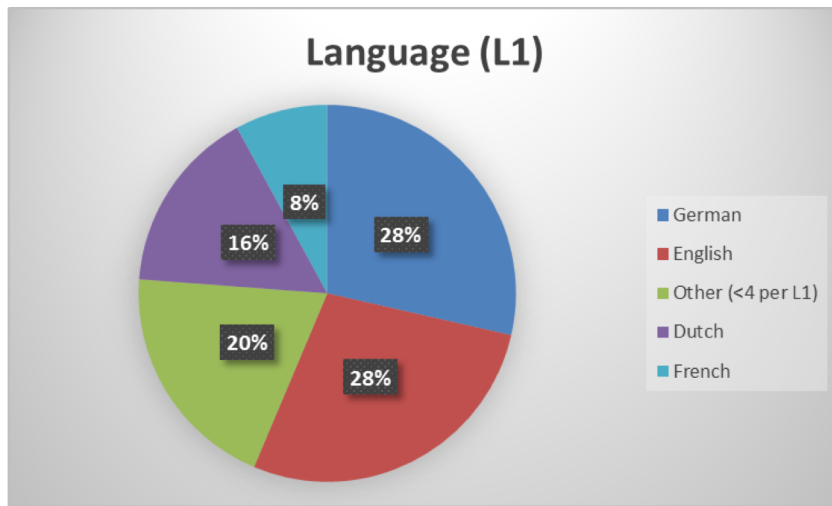
Live subtitlers are rather young people, with almost 70% younger than 40! And the majority is female.

Results: demographics



Many countries are represented, with the highest score for Germany
21%: country of origin \neq country of residence

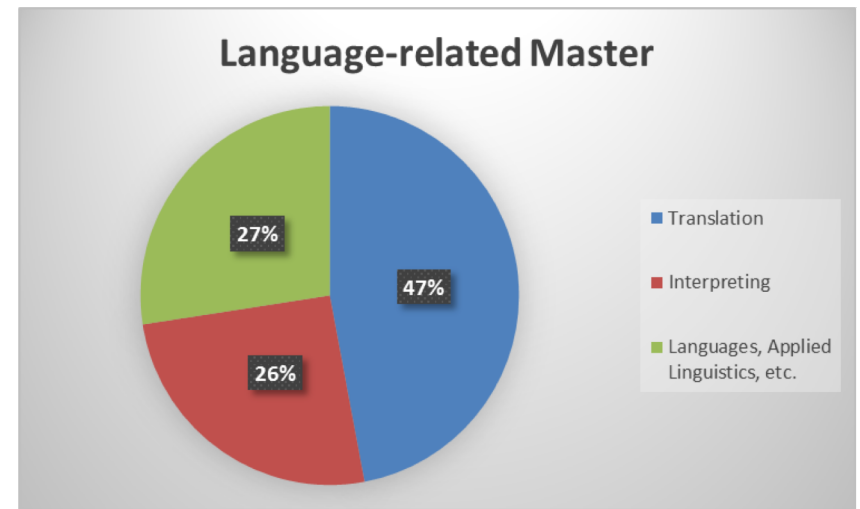
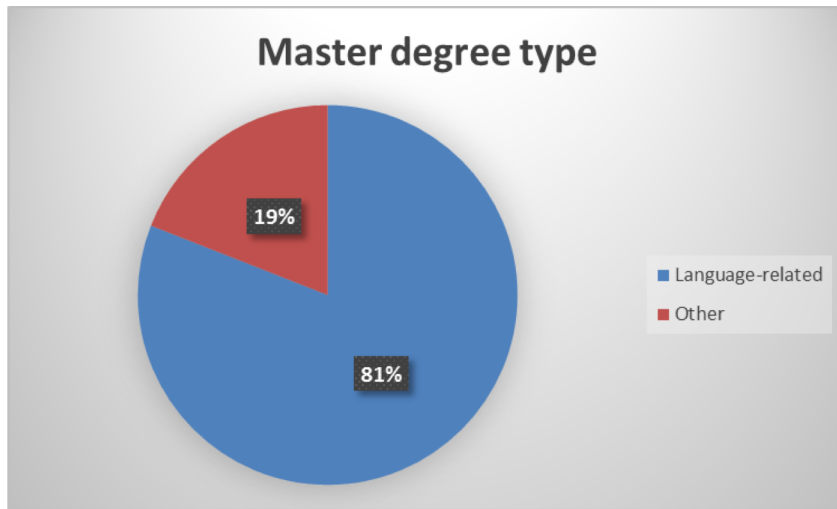
Results: demographics



English + German > 50%

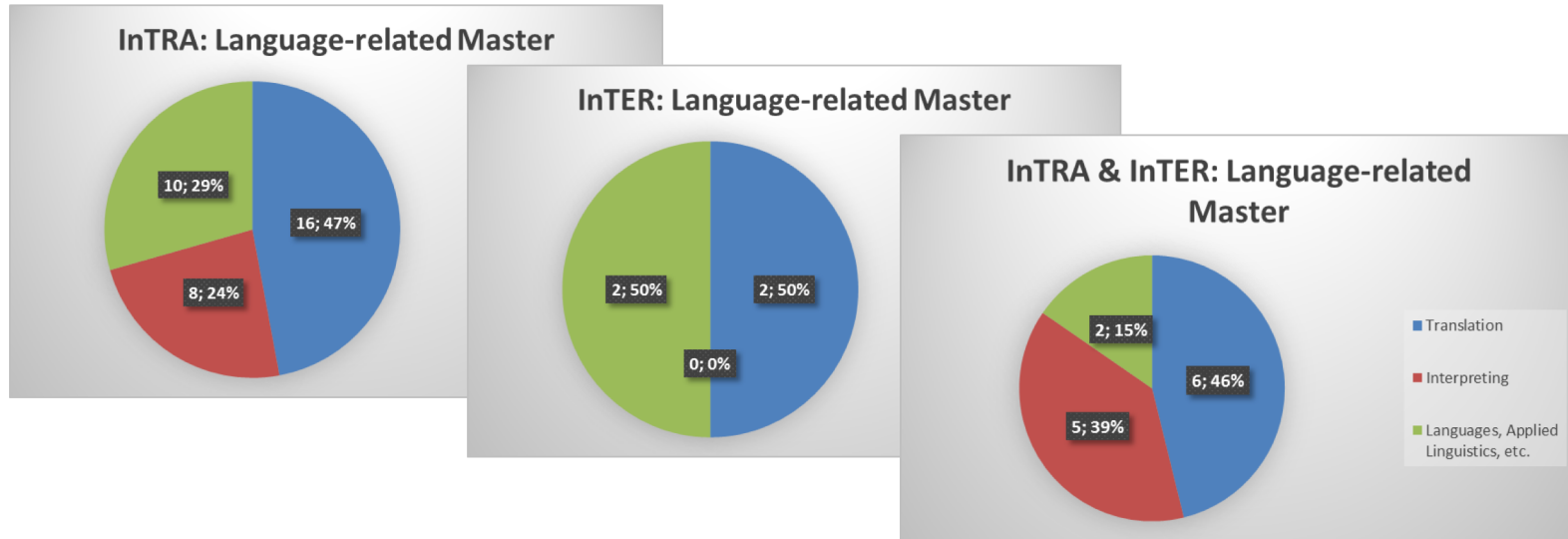
Live subtitlers hold a Bachelor degree or Master (79%)

Results: demographics



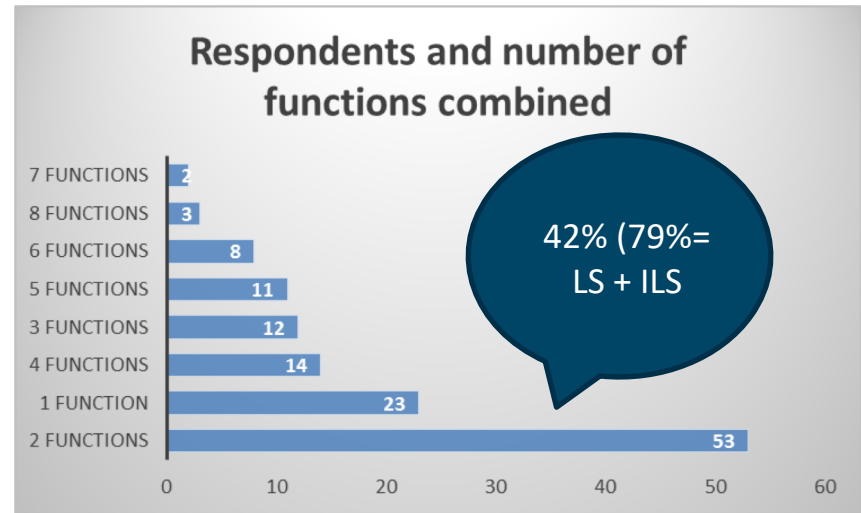
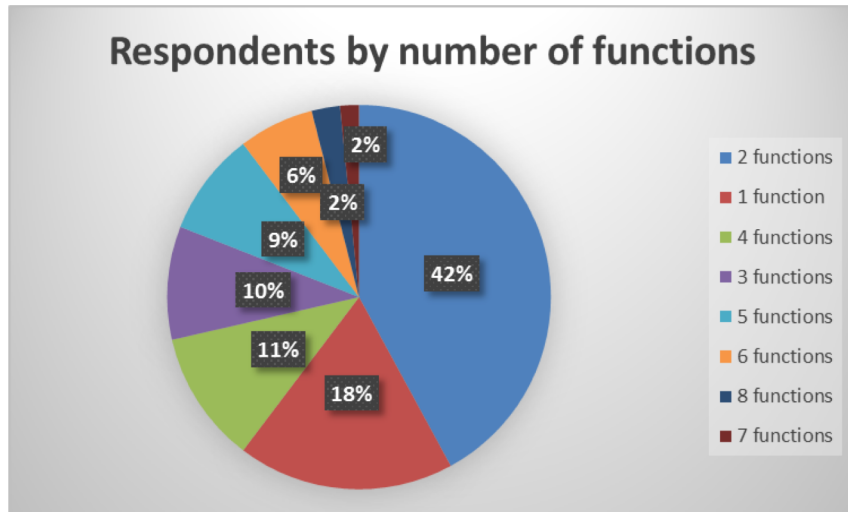
81% of Master holders have a language-related degree, many in translation

Results: demographics



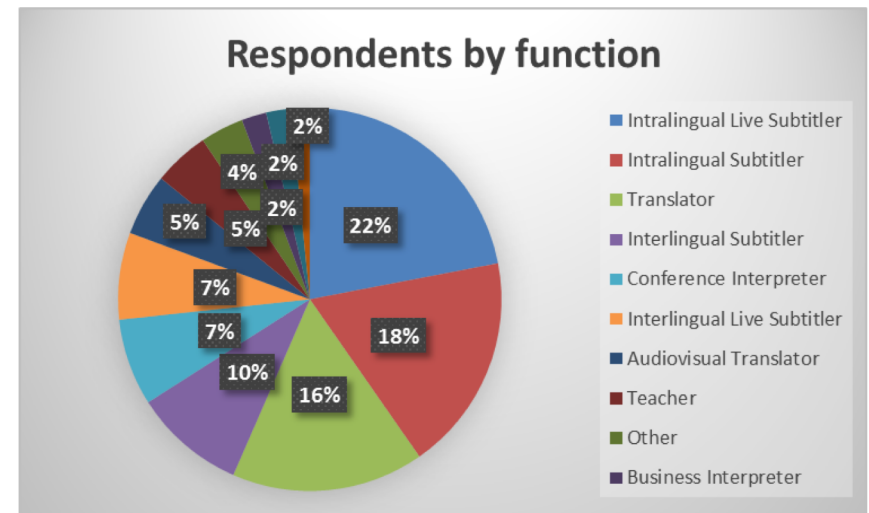
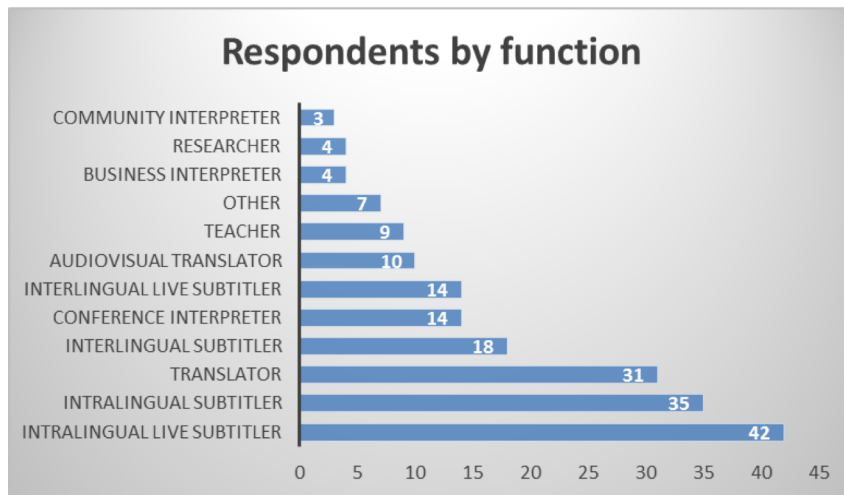
Masters in translation are more frequent than masters in interpreting or in other language-related disciplines

Results: demographics



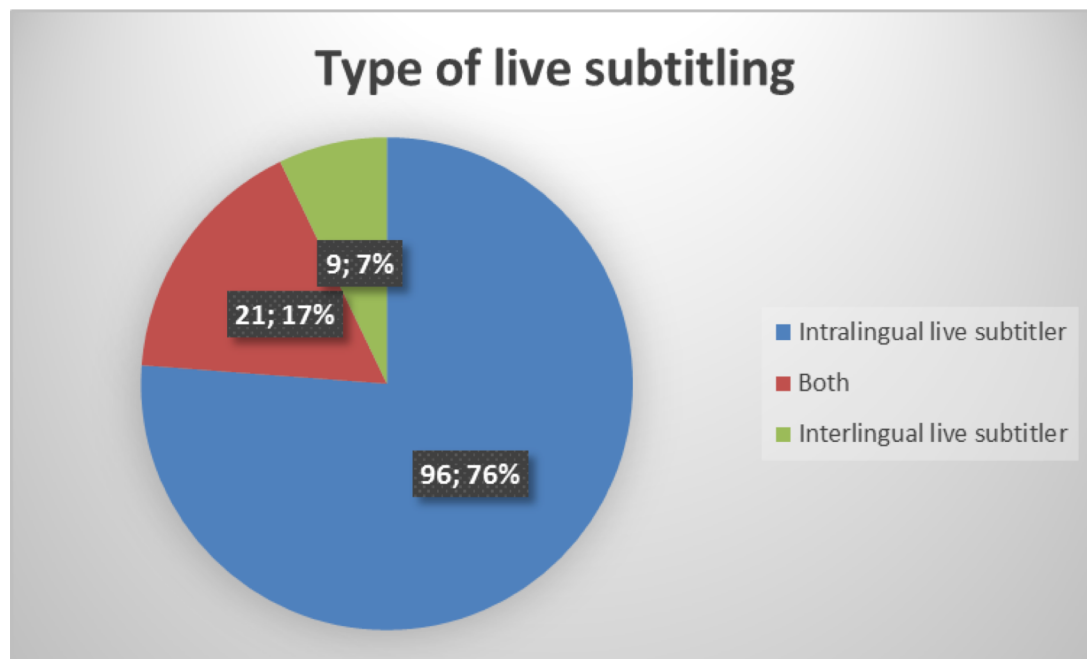
Only 18% have one function, 42% have two
Of those 42%, 79% combine LS and ILS

Results: demographics



The most frequent function (combined or not) is intralingual live subtitler, followed by intralingual subtitler
ILSer is 6th in the ranking

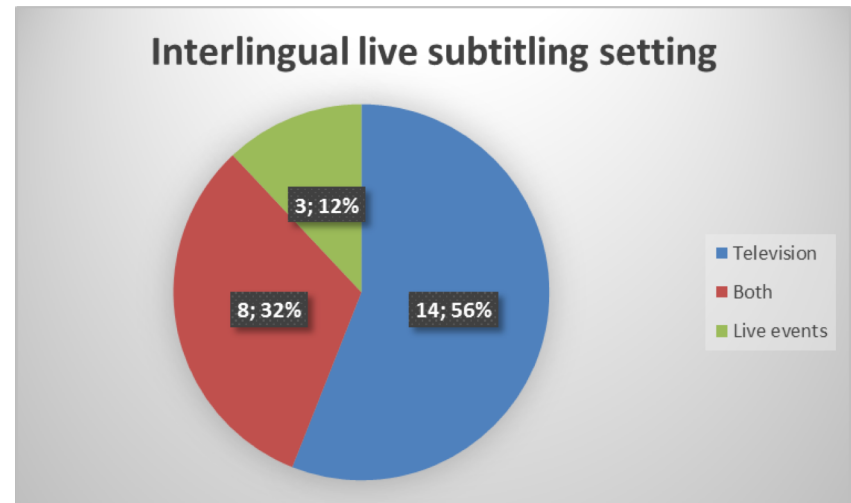
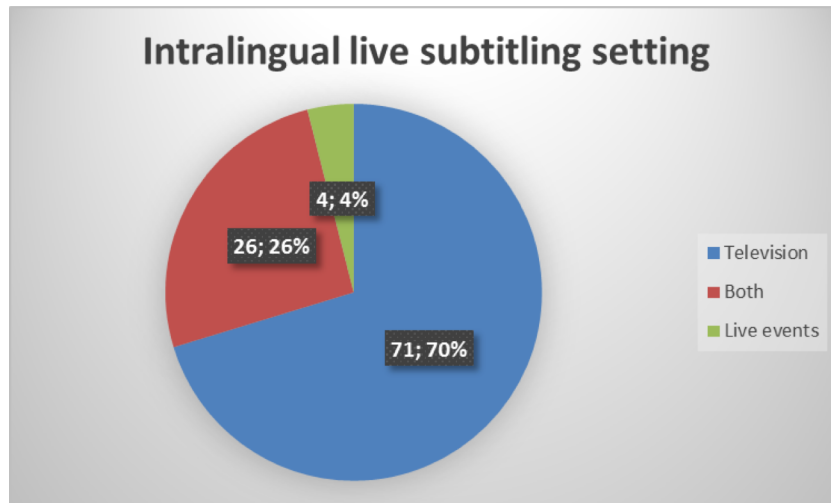
Results: type of live subtitling of participants



2 analyses:
intralingual and
interlingual → 2
blocks in survey,
same questions

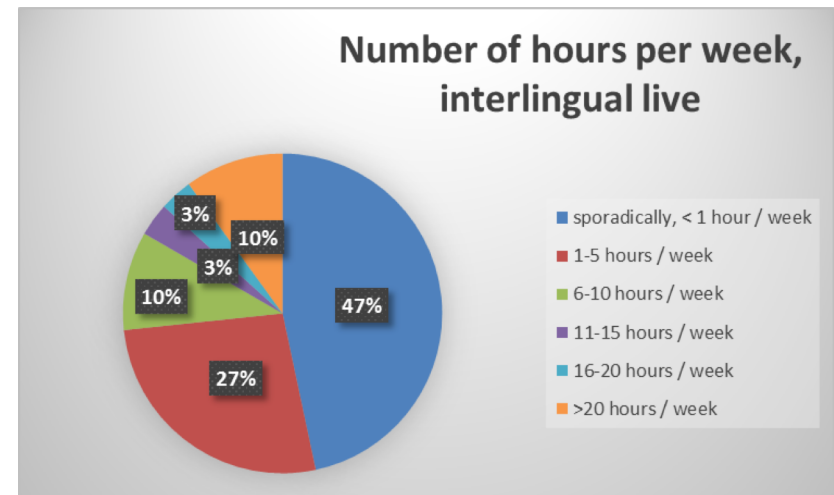
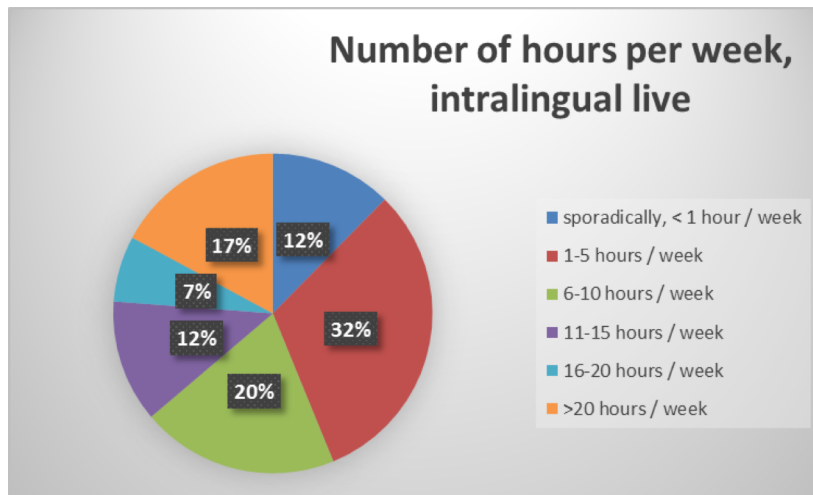
- Only a very small number of live subtitlers work exclusively interlingually
- Years of experience: 9 versus 6.7

Results: television or live events?



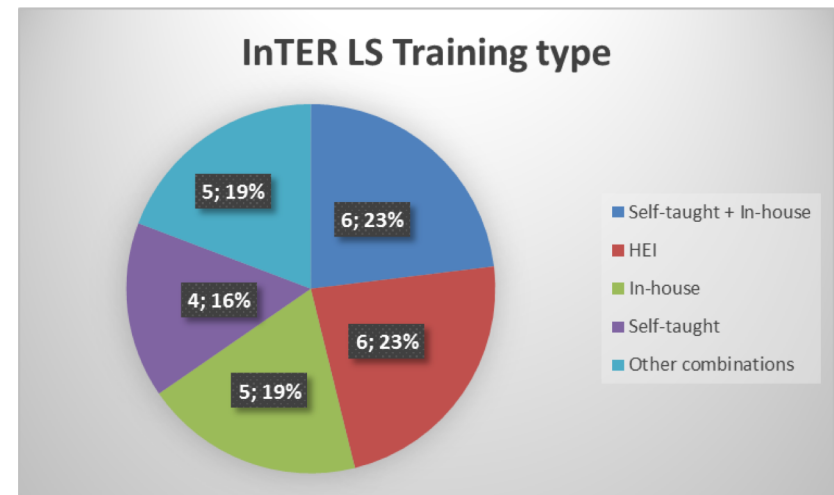
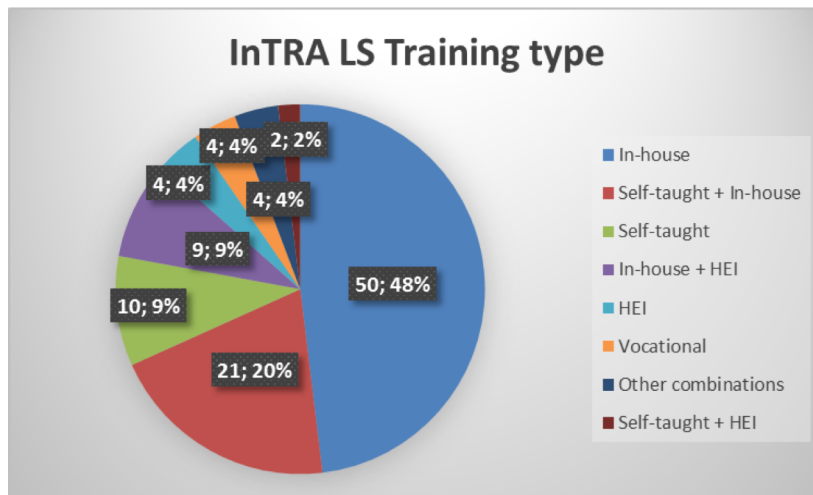
- Television is the most frequent setting, even more for intralingual live (70%)

Results: full-time job?



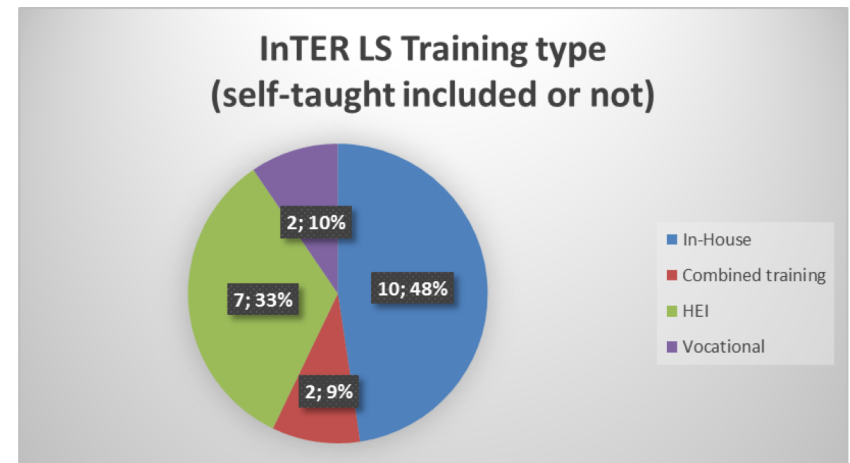
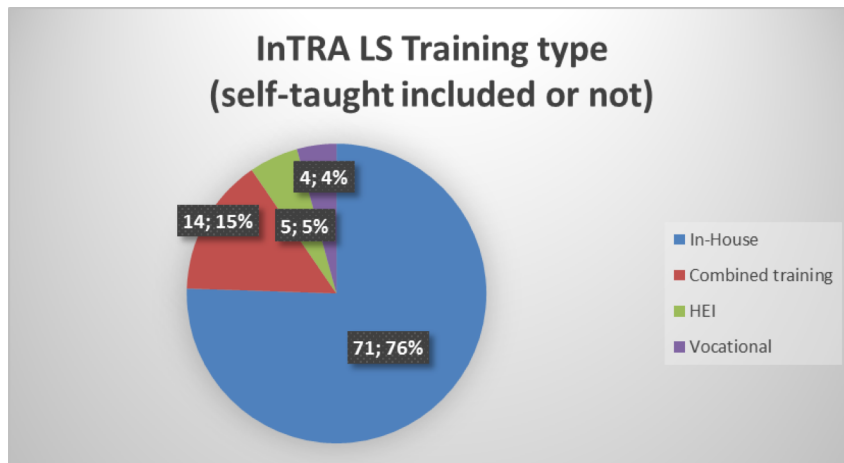
- Only 17% work more than half-time as LS versus 10% as ILS → NOT a full-time job (cf. different functions)
- Almost 50% of interlingual live subtitlers work sporadically

Results: training type



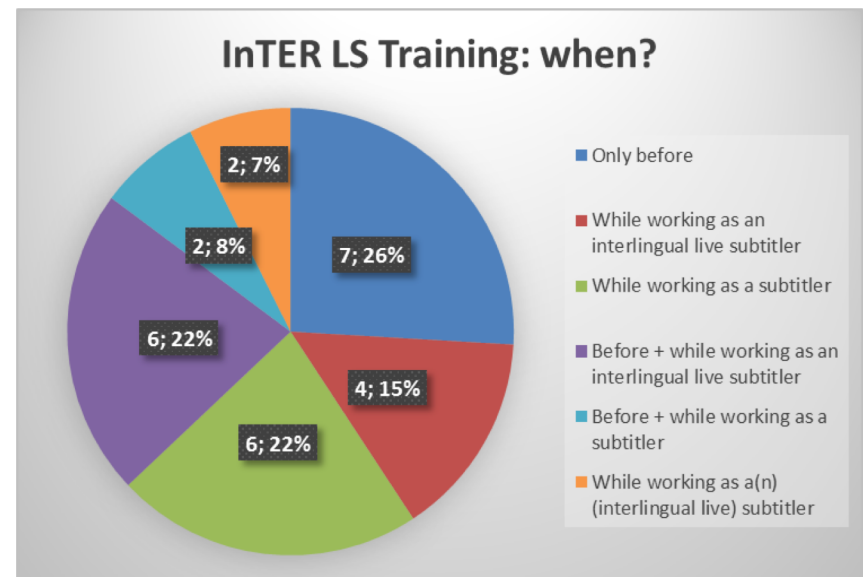
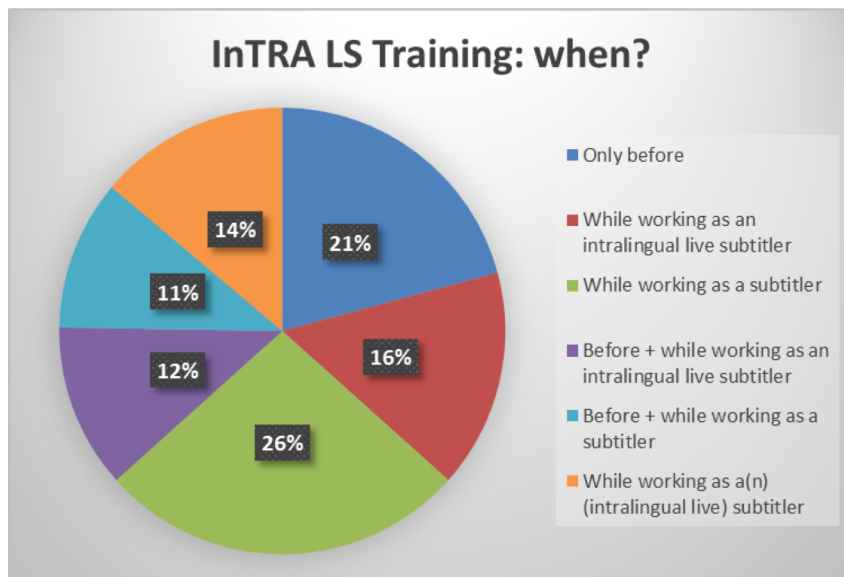
- More differences among intralingual live subtitlers, but results for interlingual based on only a few participants
- Further analyses based on training type, except self-taught (not a real training)

Results: training type?



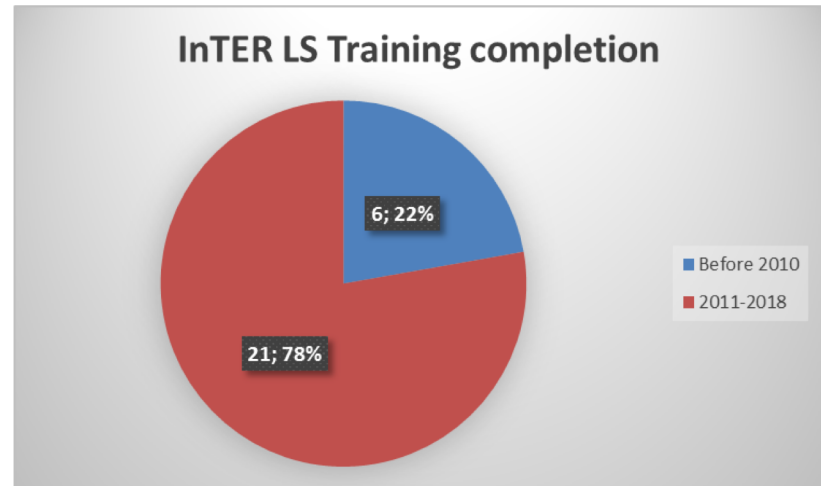
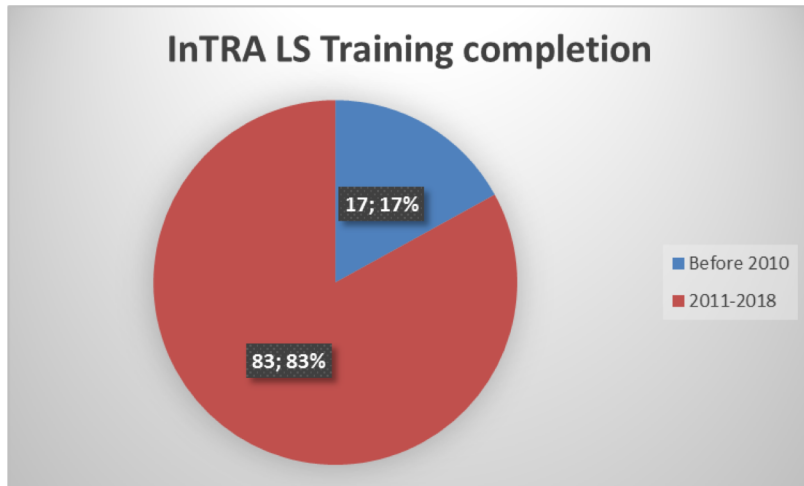
- In-house training is the most frequent training type, even more frequent among inTRA LS
- Training at HEI is more frequent among inTER LS

Results: training timing?



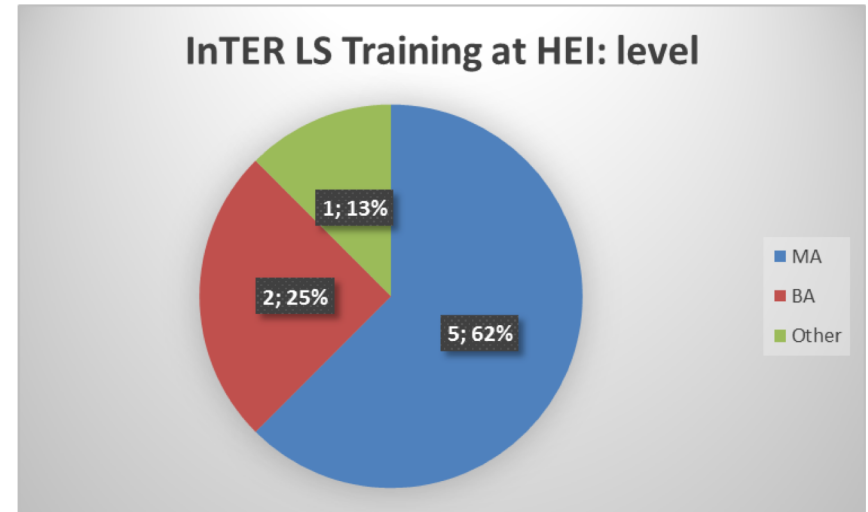
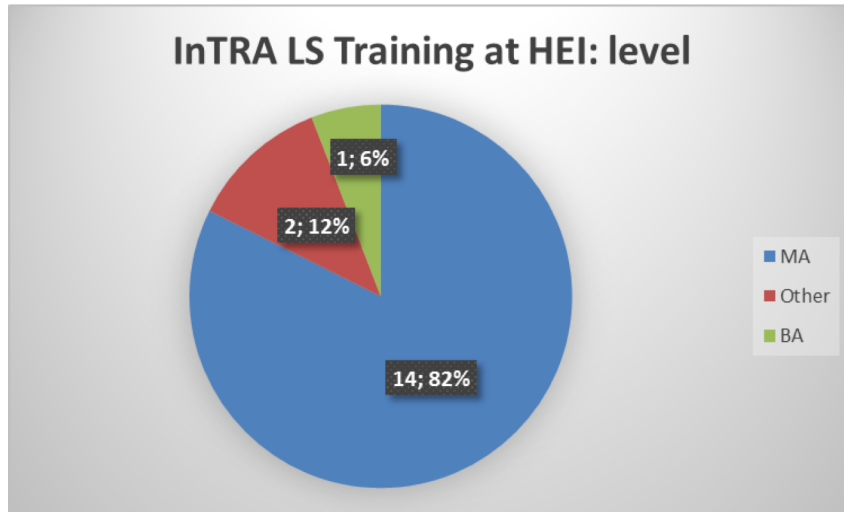
- Timing of training is very similar in both groups: while working as LS is more frequent
- Only 21% (LS) and 26% (ILS) received a training only before working as (I)LS

Results: training completion year?



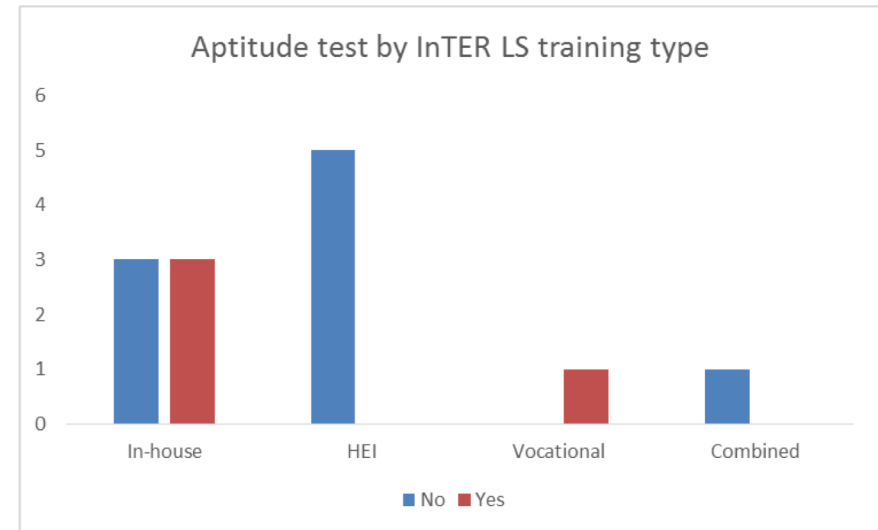
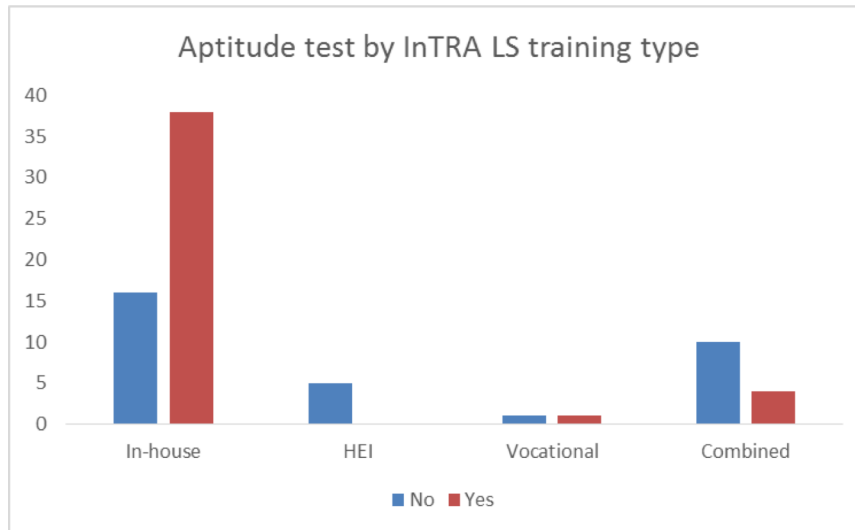
- In both groups, training completion is rather recent

Results: training at HEI, Master level?



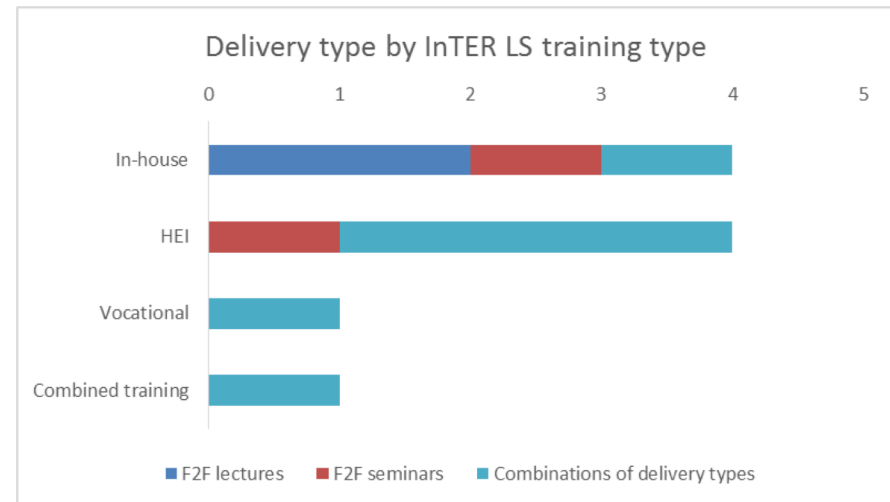
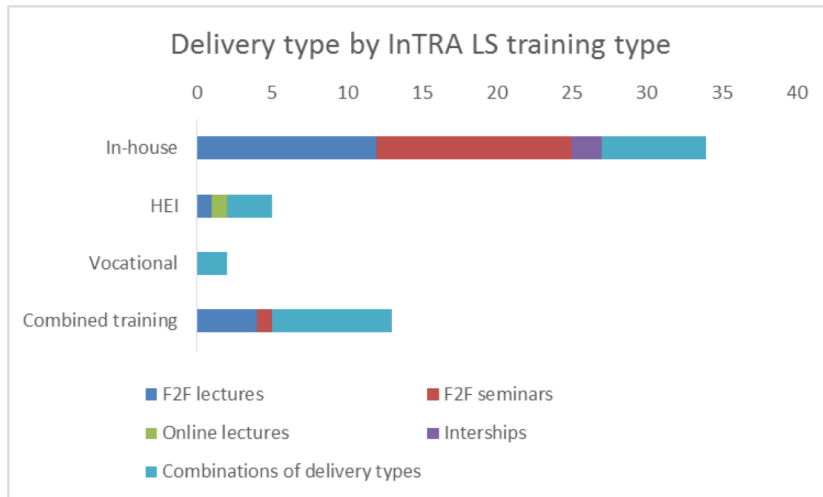
- In both groups, training at a HEI is generally at master-level

Results: aptitude tests?



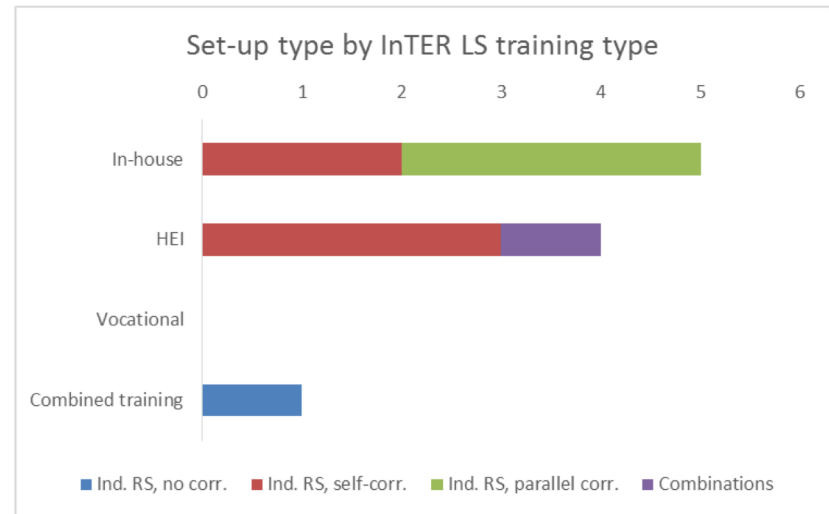
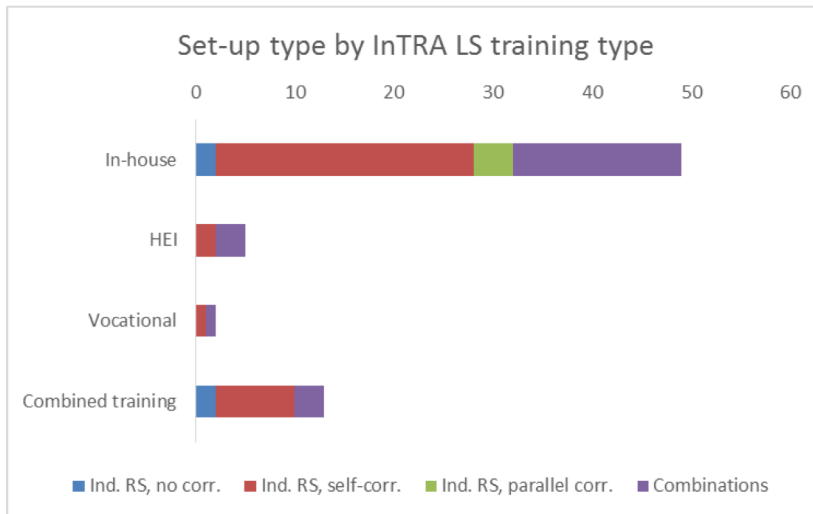
- Aptitude tests are frequent for in-house trainings, but not in other contexts

Results: training delivery types?



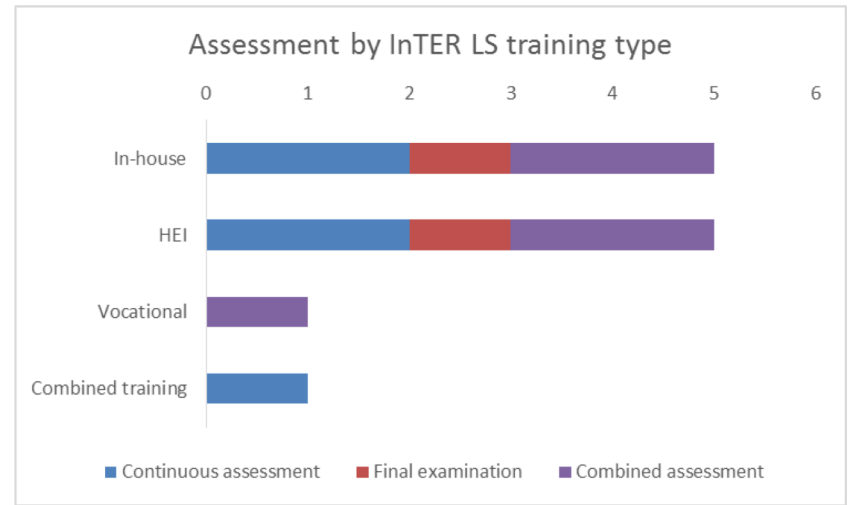
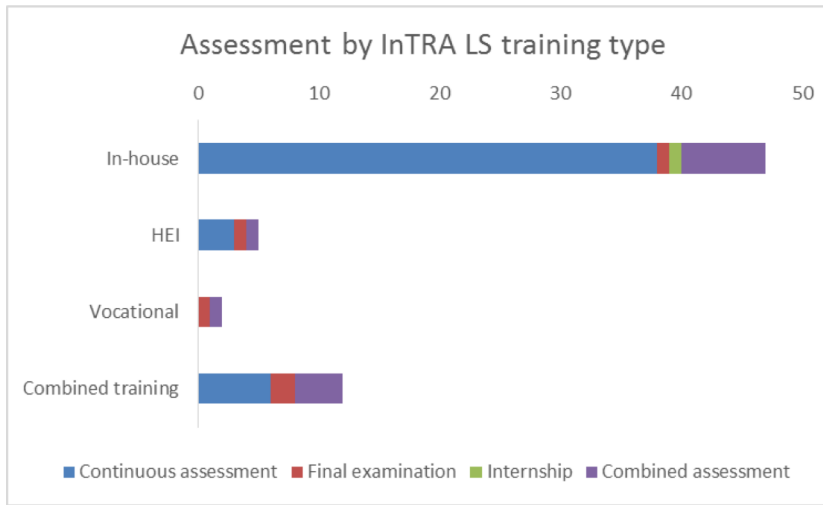
- Delivery types vary among all types of training: F2F lectures and seminars, internships and combinations
- online lectures (or seminars) are very rare

Results: LS set-up type during training?



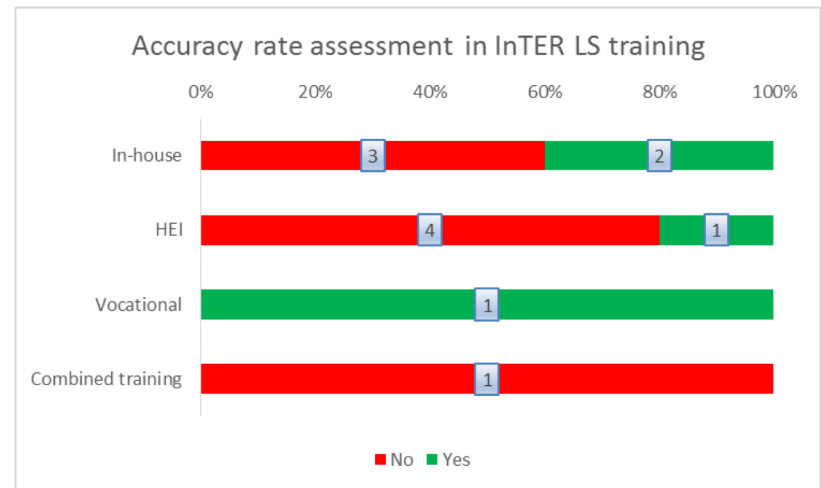
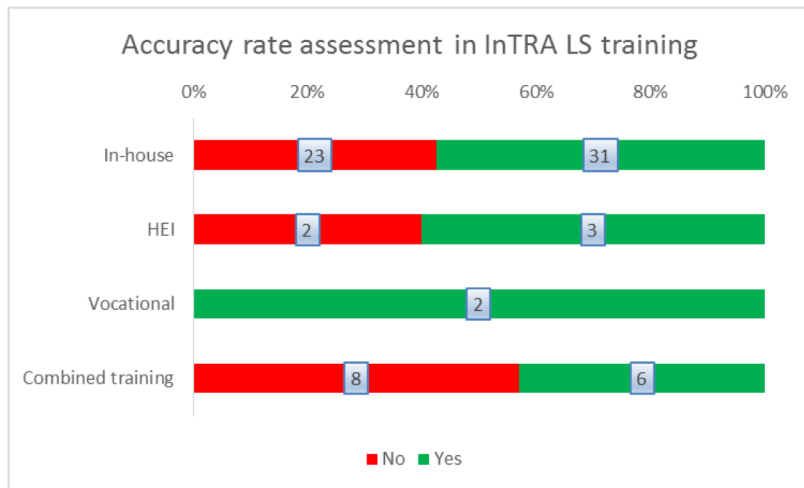
- Individual RS without correction not so frequent
- The main type of set-up trained is individual RS with self-correction
- For InTER: also focus on individual RS with parallel correction

Results: assessment type?



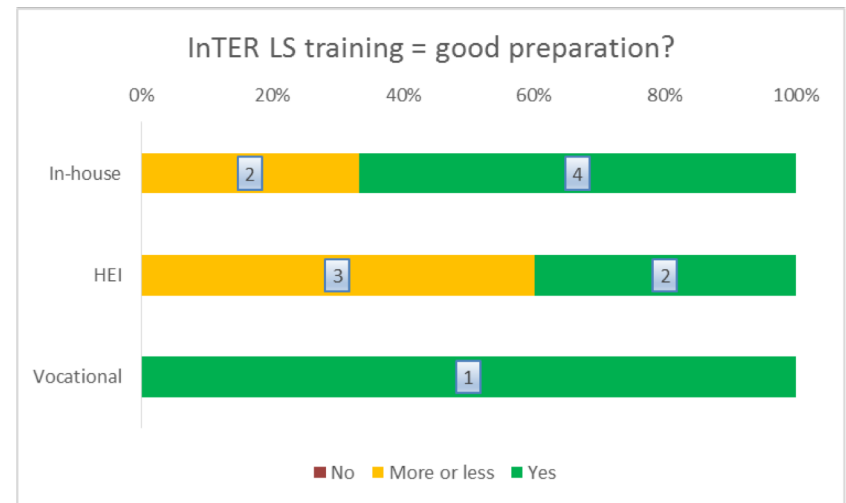
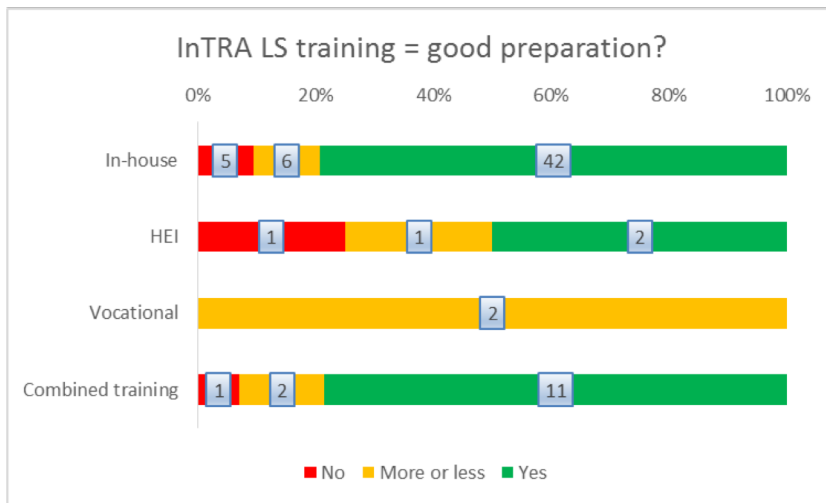
- Continuous assessment is generally the preferred assessment method

Results: assessment of accuracy rate?



- The accuracy rate is always assessed in vocational training, but not always in other types of training

Results: training quality perception



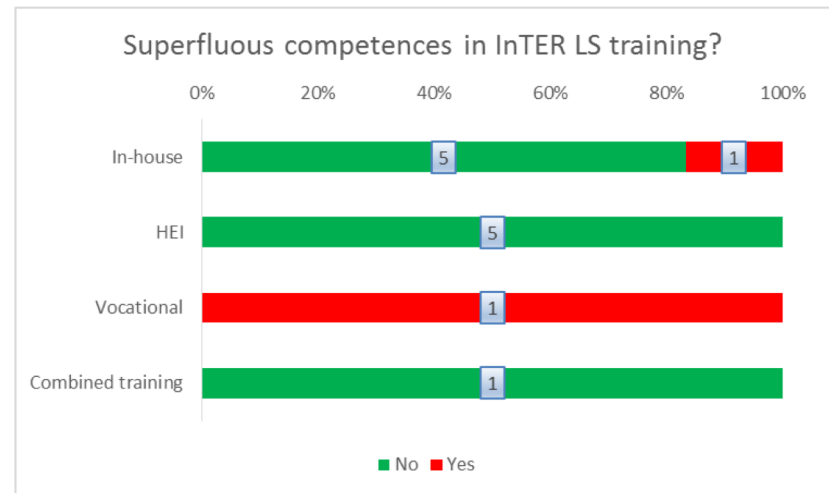
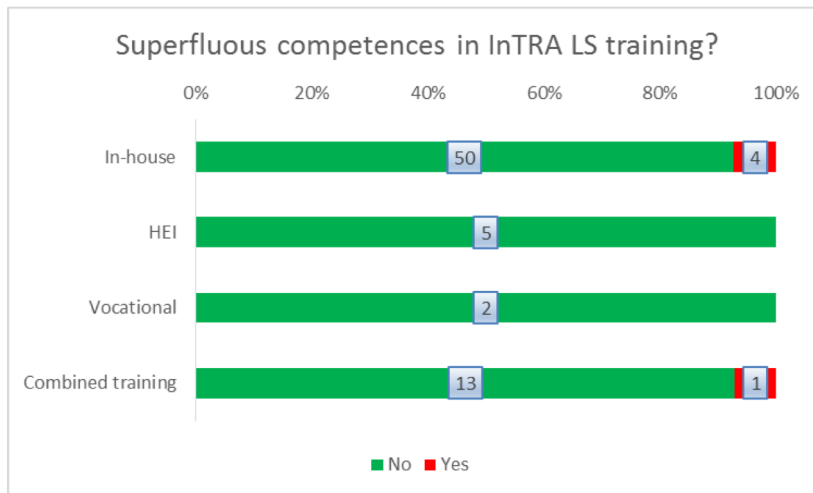
- Respondents are generally positive about their training as a good preparation for the job

Results: training quality perception (continued)

Some comments from the respondents

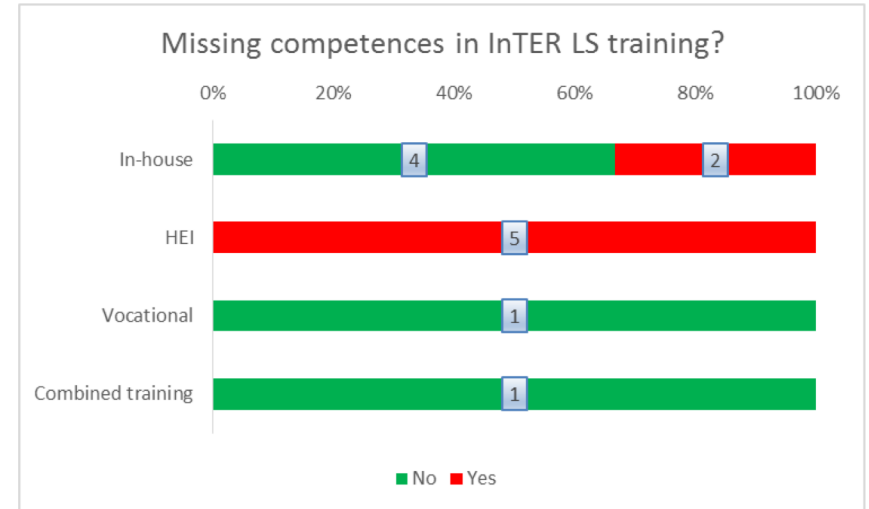
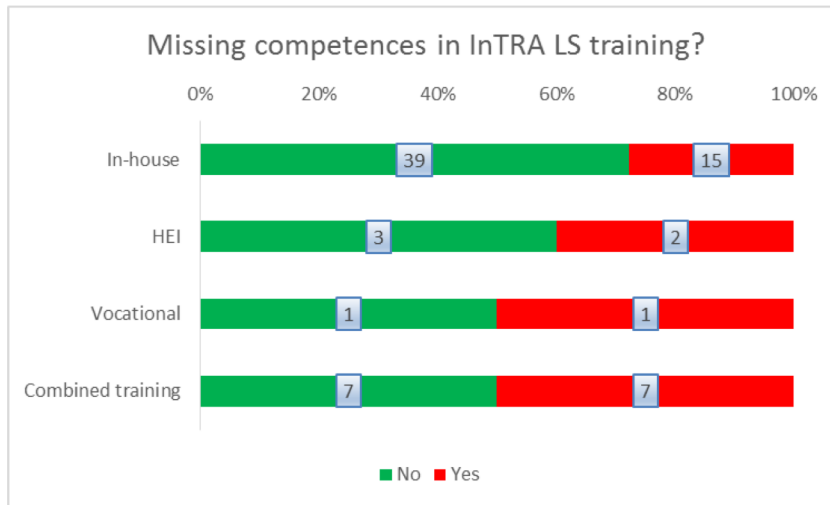
- In-house
 - ✓ hands-on approach
 - ✓ real-life practice material
 - ✓ gradual exposure to more challenging respeaking situations
 - ✓ “Practice makes perfect”
 - limited time frame
 - only taught how to work with Dragon
- HEI
 - ✓ Good introduction
 - More practice needed
- Combined
 - ✓ Good introduction → positive for interview to get the job
 - Interest triggered but not enough to work as a LS

Results: superfluous competences?



- Very few superfluous competences
 - Some comments for InTRA
 - In-house: one respondent does feel that the historical theory of subtitling was not relevant. In addition, one respondent feels that their course focused a little too much on technical details.

Results: missing competences?



- Interlingual LS seem to have missed more competences in their training at HEI

Results: missing competences? (continued)

Some comments: inTRA

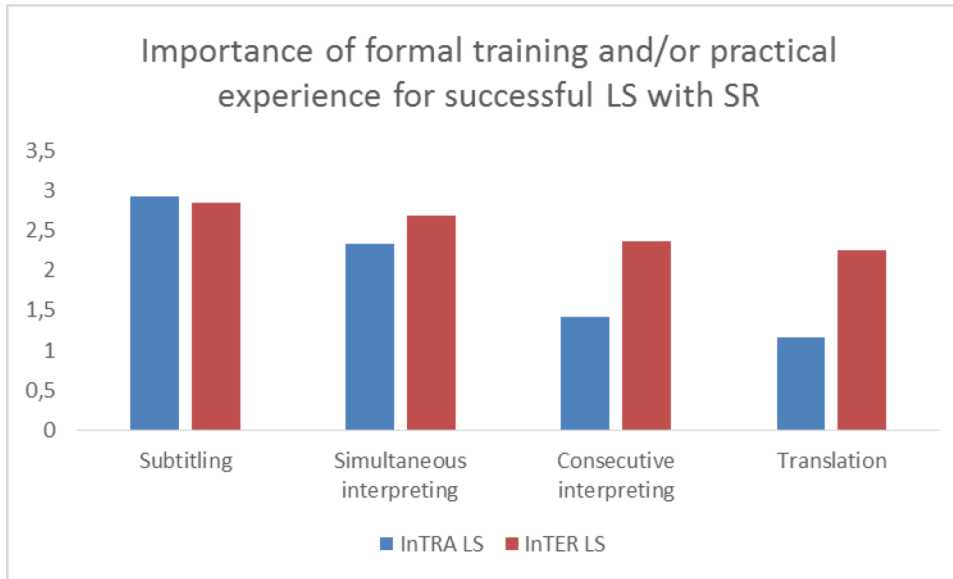
- SR software, e.g. how to deal with the lexicon, which words to add to the vocabulary
- More detailed overview of the live subtitling software and its capabilities and on software updates
- Shortcut and hotkey systems
- How and which errors to correct
- Practice with real-life situations, e.g. the limited space of a subtitle while respeaking
- Tools for terminology extraction and quality assurance regarding self-editing

Results: missing competences? (continued)

Some comments: inTER (or both)

- How to work with Wincaps
- How to work with several live subtitlers at the same time
- How to control stress when Respeaking
- Training for speed in translation
- Typing
- Voice control, Voice coaching
- How to split attention

Results: perception of importance of formal training and/or practical experience for successful LS with SR



Focus on InTRA:

Significant differences:

Subtitling > SI > CI = T ($p < .008$)

Focus on InTER

No differences between all 4 prerequisites → all 4 are equally important

When you look at all 4 prerequisites separately for InTRA versus InTER:

- No difference for subtitling or SI
- CI is significantly more important for InTER than for InTRA
- Translation is significantly more important for InTER than for InTRA

Results: perception of importance of a series of abilities

Please rate the importance of the following possible prerequisites for successful intralingual / interlingual live subtitling with SR.

0 = not important; 4 = very important.

Ability to multitask: listening while speaking, writing while reading

Perfect command of the source and target languages

Speech recognition: Interaction with the software while respeaking (e.g. clear enunciation, staying calm, how to dictate, etc.)

Ability to cope with turn-taking or overlapping dialogue

Accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation

Ability to select the essence of the source text and rephrase it into the same language/interpret it into the TL

Knowledge of current affairs

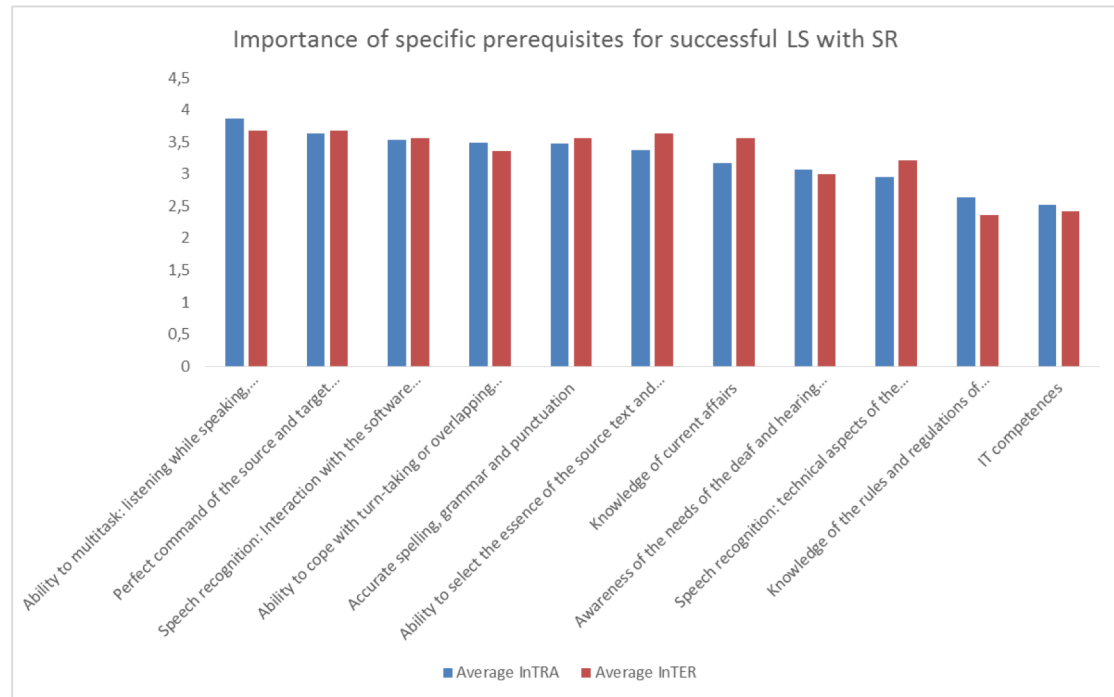
Awareness of the needs of the deaf and hearing impaired

Speech recognition: technical aspects of the software prior to respeaking (terminology management, voice training, etc.)

Knowledge of the rules and regulations of companies, e.g. style sheets and norms

IT competences

Results:
perception
of
importance
of a series of
abilities
(continued)



- Focus on InTRA: first and second significantly more important than the rest
- Focus on InTER: no significant differences
- InTRA versus InTER: no significant differences for any prerequisite

Conclusions: profile

Who are live subtitlers?

- young women (<40 yrs) with a language-related HEI (MA) degree who have worked or are working part-time in television for more than 5 years

How is the current Intra and Interlingual LS training organized?

- in-house and HEI (MA) training of very dispersed duration and instruction type, using continuous assessment and focussed on individual RS with self-correction

Are LS satisfied with current LS training?

- Yes, in general
- No superfluous competences, but missing competences

Conclusions: training needs and needed skills

- Both InTRA LS and InTER LS **require different skills**, i.e. subtitling, simultaneous interpreting (SI), consecutive interpreting (CI) and translation
- However, for **InTER**, these different skills are considered **equally important**, whereas this is not the case for inTRA where these skills are ranked in descending order
- InTRA: focus on subtitling and simultaneous aspect of the task
- InTER: focus on subtitling, SI, CI and translation → need to remove the frontier between translation and interpreting in training at HEI

Thank you for your attention!

Questions?

isabelle.robert@uantwerpen.be

aline.remael@uantwerpen.be

ella.diels@student.uantwerpen.be