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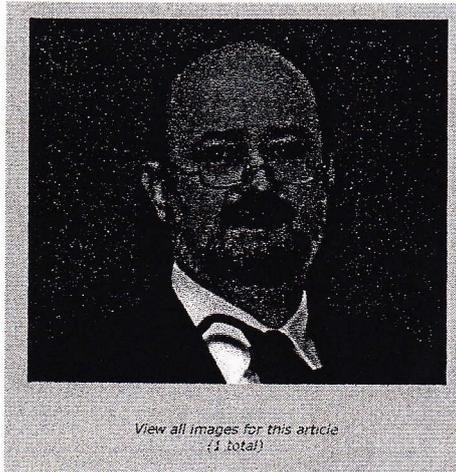
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Breakthroughs In Cross Lingual Communication and Speech-to-Speech Translation

(link to this article)

November 4, 2005 Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Karlsruhe's joint International Center for Advanced Communication Technologies (InterACT) held a landmark videoconference last week to demonstrate new breakthroughs in cross-lingual communication. InterACT director, computer science professor Alex Waibel, who is a faculty member at both institutions, demonstrated domain-independent, speech-to-speech translation in a lecture, which was simultaneously translated from English to Spanish to German. Current speech-to-speech translation systems allow translation of spontaneous speech in very limited situations, like making hotel reservations or tourist shopping, but they cannot enable translation of large, open domains like lectures, television broadcasts, meetings or telephone conversations. The new technology developed by InterACT researchers fills that gap and makes it possible to extend such systems to other languages and lecture types.



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Waibel also illustrated new ways of delivering speech translation services beyond traditional headsets and an audio system. One involves an array of small ultra-sound speakers that deliver a narrow beam of audio in a foreign language to a particular individual, while others nearby hear the same speech in the original language as it's spoken without disturbance.

Foreign language translation also can be produced through a system that tracks and measures electrical currents on the surface of a person's cheek and throat as they mouth words instead of speaking aloud. The system takes the signal off of electrodes that recognize muscle movement, translates and delivers it as audible sound in another language.

"Thus," said Waibel, "by moving our articulators in English, we can demonstrate the generation of speech in Spanish, German or other languages. In the future, such transducers could be implanted, enabling a speaker to produce any language at will."

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In addition to these new technological breakthroughs, Waibel and his colleagues also demonstrated other developments, including delivery of speech via heads-up display and text, a PDA-based pocket interpreter for fieldwork such as medical relief or military operations, as well as simultaneous translation of videos of European Parliamentary sessions.

InterACT, headquartered at Carnegie Mellon and the University of Karlsruhe, is dedicated to promoting greater understanding among the world's people without removing cultural and linguistic individuality and diversity. Its researchers build speech, image and text translation technologies that help to improve communication by making the world's language barriers transparent.

via our friend Red at the perennially-interesting Red Ferret Journal

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