

3 Input devices – “Speech recognition system”

(Unit 5, task 6 – Interview with Anne Simpson)

I: Now, mobile phones and the Internet have changed the way we all communicate. However, we still need to use a keyboard and a mouse to communicate with computers. When will we be able to interact with PCs by voice?

A: Well, the technology already exists. But the habit of talking to computer is only just beginning to take off.

I: What are the basic components of a speech recognition system?

A: Basically, you need voice recognition software, a sound card and a microphone. If you want to have good results, you should get a high quality headset microphone.

I: Right, what sort of things can you do with the speech recognition system?

A: The system converts voice into text. So, you can dictate text directly onto your word processor or e-mail program. The technology is particularly useful for dictating notes, business memos, letters and e-mail.

I: But is dictation accurate? I mean, does the system interpret all the words correctly?

A: Speech companies claim an accuracy rate of around 98%, but the system is more accurate, if we train the software by reading aloud sample text for a few minutes. This process teaches the program to recognize words that are not in its built-in dictionary. For example, proper names, abbreviations, unusual words, etc.

I: I see, and can you execute programs and navigate around menus and windows?

A: Yes, you can control your PC by voice commands. This means, you can launch programs, open a file, save it in a particular formats or print it. Some systems even let you search the web by voice or chat using your voice instead of the keyboard.

I: Mmm, that does sound exciting.