



PROFESSIONAL WORK AND EXPERIENCE AS AN AUDIOVISUAL TRANSLATOR

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INTRODUCTION

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GENERAL CHARACTERISTIC

- Subtitles should allow viewers to understand the meaning of the dialogue without distracting from the enjoyment of the movie.
- There are spatial and temporal constraints applied to subtitling.
- Subtitles are shorter and written in a simpler form than sentences in printed sources.



Fig.1 *Teens on the TOP!* (2024).

GENERAL CHARACTERISTIC

- **Simplification** is involved when converting from the oral to the written mode, and “since the verbal subtitle sign interacts with the visual and oral signs and codes of the film,
- text **reduction** applied in subtitling that usually takes the form of eliminating information irrelevant for understanding purposes, followed by reformulating the relevant information in as **concise** a form as is possible or required.

STAGES IN SUBTITLING

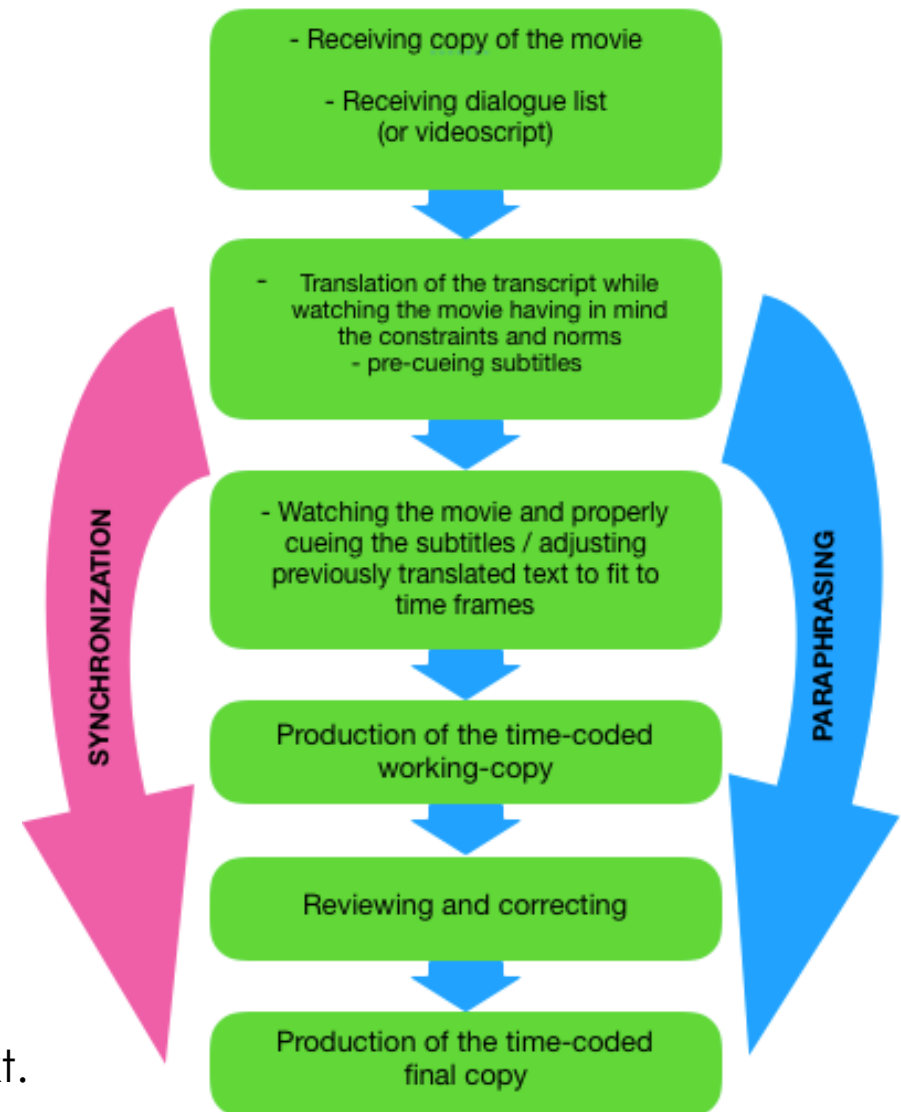


Fig.2 Stages in the subtitling of the audiovisual text.



NORMS IN SUBTITLING

- Norm for subtitles is that they use one or two lines, and contain up to a maximum of 84 characters with spaces for one caption.

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- Timed Text Style Guide: Subtitle Timing Guidelines (Netflix, 2024).
- Timed Text Style Guide: General Guidelines (Netflix, 2024).

ISSUES IN SUBTITLING

- Language and culture
 - Audience and cognition
 - Spoken and written language
 - Time and space
 - Text compression and paraphrasing
-
- A common misconception is that subtitles replace oral dialogue with written one. Subtitles are not a replacement for anything, only an addition to a film – they form an overlay so that one has a kind of simultaneous bicultural interpretation of what is going on.



LANGUAGE

- Transfer from spoken to written text
- Swear words and slang
- Taboo
- Dialects and accents
- Broken language
- Use of several languages in the audiovisual programme
- Coherence
- etc.



CULTURE

- Cultural references
- Popular culture
- Intertextuality
- Humour
- Songs
- Poetry
- Proverbs
- Figurative language
- etc.



COGNITION

- Reading speed: 15 versus 17 characters per second (also 17 and 20)
- Audience: adults versus children
- Language needs to be adjusted for the most common form
- Efficient for processing ease
- Effective for processing depth
- Appropriate for correlation between text, picture, and the audience.
- Coherent for the audience experiencing the audiovisual text as a whole



TIMING RULES

- Subtitles should be in sync with both the image and the audio.
- Subtitles should sit neatly within shots creating an effortless viewing experience which is easy on the eye.
- a minimum of 800 milliseconds to 1 second display per chunk of subtitles, and a maximum display of 6.5 to 7 seconds, or 250ms/character. 17 characters per second reading speed for adults, and 15 char./s for children.
- space constraints: not more than two lines per screen, and not more than 42 characters/ per line.
- Cuts/frames

TIME AND SPACE CONSTRAINTS

Text compression

- the original may need to be reduced by as much as 1/3 (e.g. fast speakers, several people speaking at the same time, programmes where it is felt that the audience should be left to focus on the image)
- involves paraphrasing, reformulation, summarisation, adaptation
- simplification of syntax

- Leave out: false starts, interjections, (some) repetitions, (some) interpersonal markers
- considerations of relevance for the plot
- the importance of having a strategy/ strategies

TOOLS

- Creating subtitles for the movie usually takes place in the environment of a specific computer application designed to insert subtitles in the appropriate movie frames.
- This type of application speeds up the work of the translator. In the past usually, there were more people engaged in the process of subtitling the film, however nowadays it is one person, with fewer language mistakes and lower cost, more control over the final effect, and less time used for the subtitling process.
- FREE
- JUBLER (Mac), AEGISUB (Mac, Windows) etc.



TOOLS

Professional Subtitle Software

Telestream offers two tools to create and edit captions, **MacCaption** and **CaptionMaker**. They continue to develop both for their respective platforms (MacCaptions for Mac and CaptionMaker for PC).

The screenshot displays a subtitle editing application window titled 'untitled'. The main video player shows a scene from the movie 'Lilyhammer' with the title 'LILYHAMMER' overlaid. Below the video, there are playback controls and a 'Caption' / 'Subtitle' toggle. On the right side, a list of subtitles is visible, each with a number, start and end times, and the text of the subtitle. The list includes:

Number	Start Time	End Time	Text
1	00:00:32:13	00:00:35:08	-Hey how is everything going?
2	00:01:00:19	00:01:01:23	-Not bad. Yourself?
3	00:01:01:23	00:01:02:21	-Enough small talk. -Ok
4	00:01:06:16	00:01:08:13	[gunfire in the distance]
5	00:01:49:06	00:01:54:11	Lillehammer
6	00:02:11:04	00:02:23:14	-Well that escalated quickly.
7	00:02:23:14	00:02:29:13	-Unbelievably so.
8	00:02:29:13	00:02:36:01	Don't worry. No ones reading this anyway.

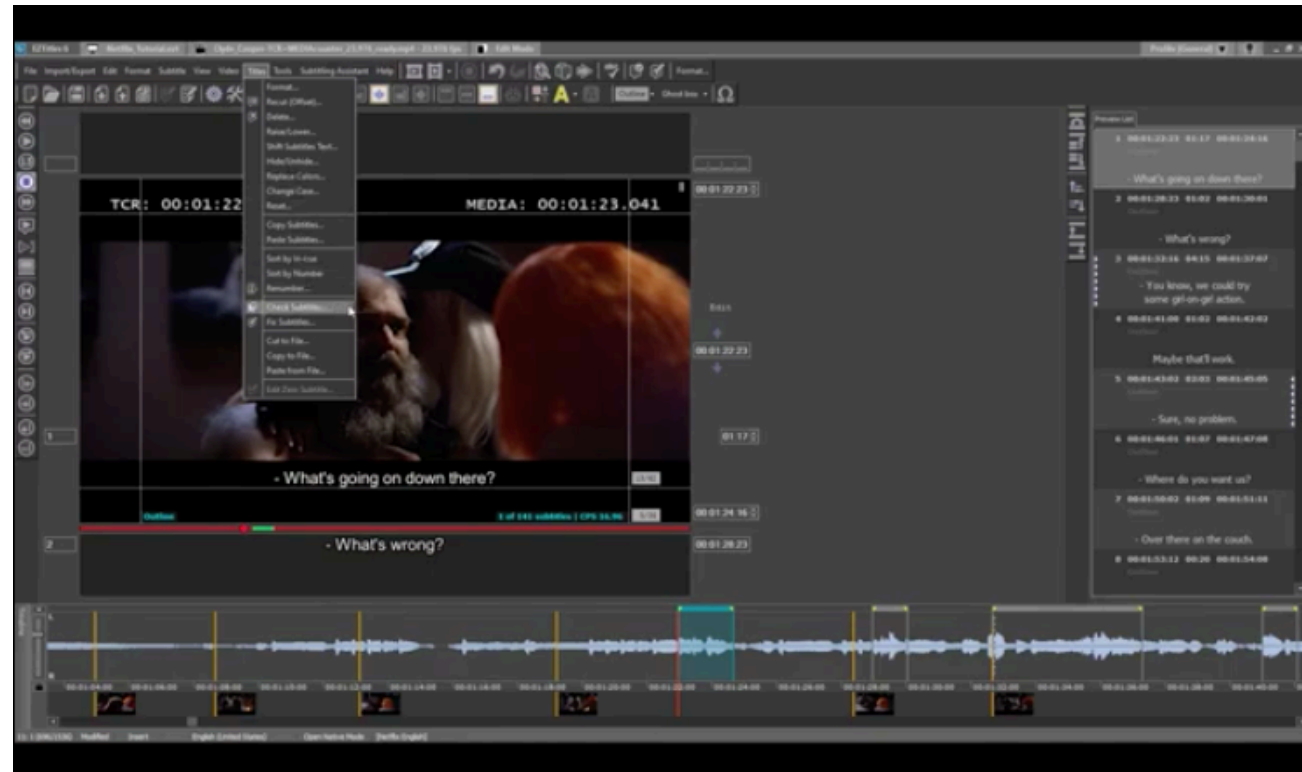
At the bottom right, a status bar indicates '3 captions need attention.' and 'Caption 5 of 29 Calculation mode is 25 fps'.



TOOLS

Professional Subtitle Software

EZTitles offers an easy to use and intuitive interface to allow you to create a wide variety of timed text assets quickly and easily.

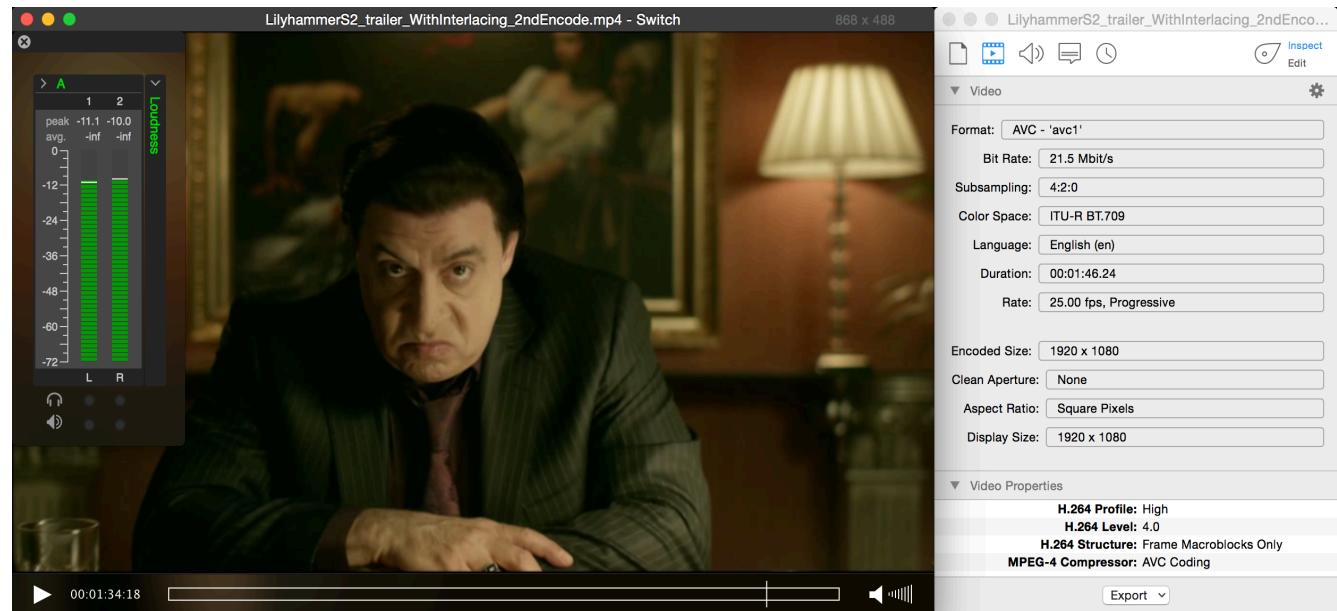


TOOLS

Quality Control

Switch Player which offers audio meters and transcoding.

Switch Pro which offers additional playback support, loudness monitoring, advanced metadata display and external preview support to AJA video system.



DIALOGUES

- Turns of the characters in the film dialogue often consist of informal speech “everyday talk” and are to be kept simple. They should resemble actual human conversation.
- The guidance for script writers suggests that dialogues are only additions to the moving pictures, Hitchcock once said that a good story is “life with the dull parts taken out,” this applies to dialogue, however in most case, interpretation of their meaning heavily depends on the situational context.
- close cooperation with the director and scriptwriter (dead or alive).
- ongoing struggle with paraphrasing (what to leave out, win/win situation).

FILM TITLES

- *Dirty Dancing* (1987)- *Swirling Sex* - (*Wirujący Sex*)
- *Die Hard* (1988) - *Glass Trap* - (*Szklana Pułapka*)
- *Operation Dunaj, Operation Danube* (2009) Jiri Menzel *Closely Watched Trains* (1966) artistic director
- Bilingual audience criticism resulting from a lack of knowledge
- Marketing strategy and film distribution policies



SONGS WITHIN A FILM

- What to do about that?
- Take into consideration the whole movie as an artwork, what is more important, words - lyrics of the song, that is the meaning, or the rhymes and the form.
- O.S.T.R., meaning not the rhymes, especially when relates to the plot of the movie.



POETRY WITHIN A FILM

- Check if the translated version of the poem you want to translate does not exist in the TL
- If it does just copy it giving the credit to the author of the existing translation (usually done at the end of the movie)
- If it does not fit into 2 lines of 42 spaces make adjustments and still give the credit
- Form or the meaning?
- Different types of poetry: rhymes (stanza, meter) versus free/white poem.



FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE:

- 5 ways of translating metaphors:
- 1. Kept if sounds natural and TL permits it
- 2. Translated as a simile (adding like or as)
- 3. Substituted by the TL metaphor
- 4. Metaphor kept + meaning explained
- 5. Meaning translated without metaphorical imagery

CHARACTERS

Operation Danube (Operacja Dunaj, 2009)

A writer employs several tools or elements to develop a character, making him or her round, including description and dialogue. A character's responses to conflict and his or her internal dialogue are also revelatory.

The translator needs to recreate the characters through TL making them as realistic as in the SL.

Swearing

Military jargon



EXTREMELY OLD MOVIES

Heat (Upał, 1964)

Songs

Rhymes

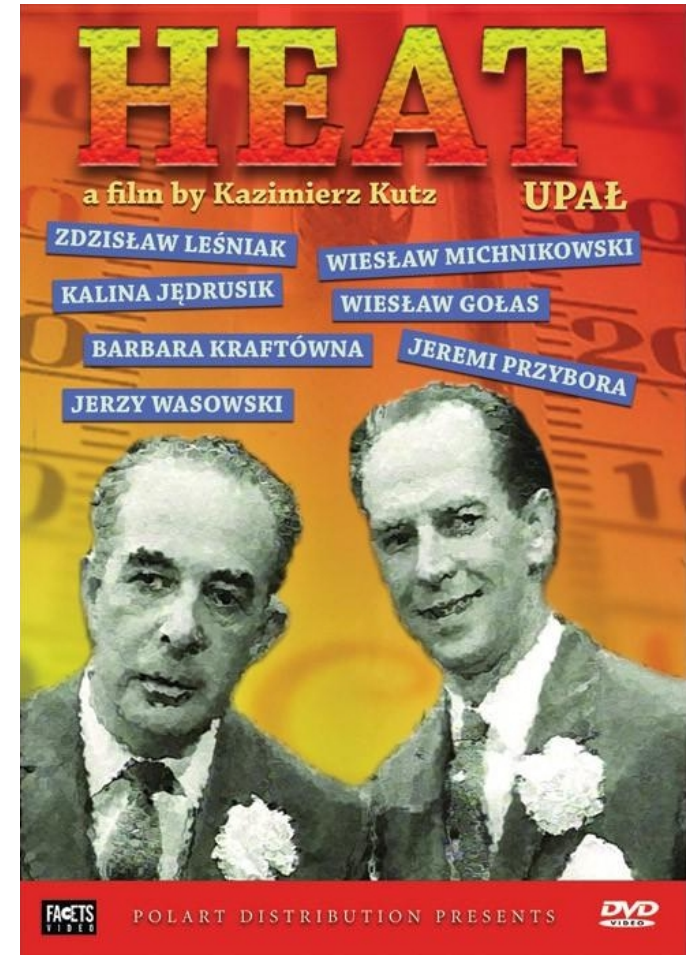
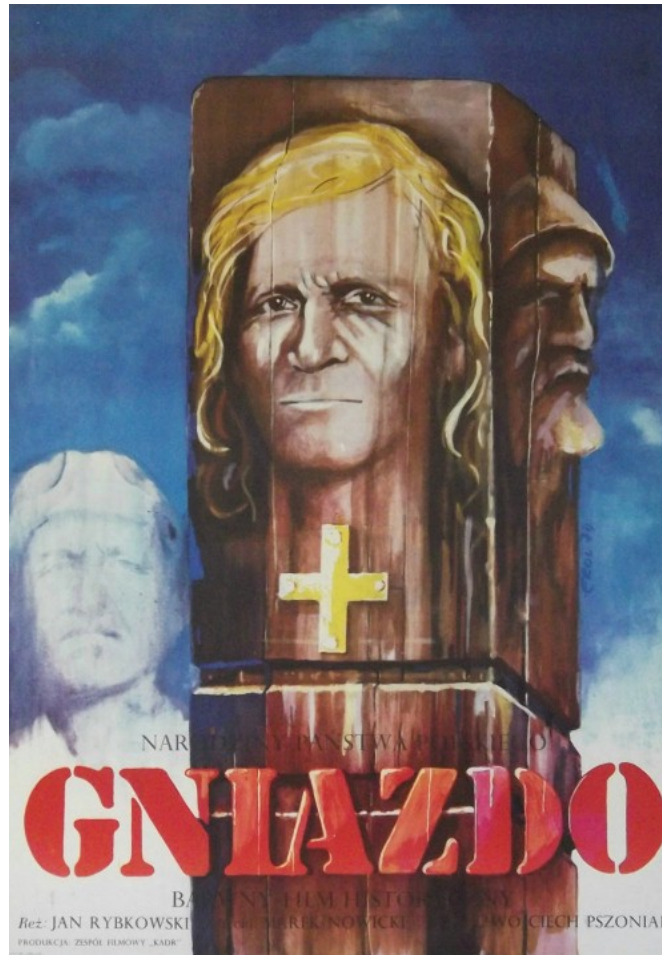
Old fashion humour

The Nest (Gniazdo, 1974)

Archaic language

Archaic proper names

Historical references



SLANG IN THE DIALOGUES

Mall Girls (Galerianki, 2009)

Cooperation with native speakers from New York, on some of the dialogues to make them realistic and natural sounding in English.

Slang

Derogatory language

Informal language

NAJMOCNIEJSZY DEBIUT FILMOWY 2009 ROKU



TRANSLATING DURING THE EDITING PROCESS

What the Sun Has Seen (Co słonko widziało, 2006)

Translating together with the process of editing. The film was to take part in a festival, time issues, to speed up the work.

Two different movies after the editing. Correcting the final subtitles to not reveal the end of the movie.





REFERENCES

- Timed Text Style Guide: Subtitle Timing Guidelines (Netflix) <https://partnerhelp.netflixstudios.com/hc/en-us/articles/360051554394-Timed-Text-Style-Guide-Subtitle-Timing-Guidelines> [accessed in April 2024].
- Timed Text Style Guide: General Requirements (Netflix) retrievable from <https://partnerhelp.netflixstudios.com/hc/en-us/articles/215758617-Timed-Text-Style-Guide-General-Requirements> [accessed in April 2024].






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