SUBTITLING PROCESS AS A SPECIAL SCIENCE

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Abstract. *The rapid development of digital media and audiovisual communication has significantly increased the importance of subtitling in modern society. Subtitling is no longer considered merely a technical activity but rather a complex interdisciplinary field that combines linguistics, translation studies, communication theory, and media technology. The subtitling process involves transforming spoken language into written text that appears on the screen simultaneously with audiovisual content. This task requires not only linguistic competence but also the ability to work within strict spatial and temporal limitations. The present article examines the subtitling process as a special scientific field within audiovisual translation studies. The research analyzes the theoretical foundations of subtitling, the stages of subtitle production, and the linguistic and technical principles that guide this process. Special attention is given to the role of subtitling in ensuring accessibility for diverse audiences, including viewers with hearing impairments. The article also explores the cognitive and communicative aspects of subtitle perception and highlights the importance of subtitling in the modern media environment. The findings demonstrate that subtitling is a complex scientific discipline that requires systematic research and professional training.*

Keywords: *subtitling, audiovisual translation, media communication, subtitle production, accessibility, translation studies, audiovisual media.*

Introduction. The twenty-first century has witnessed a dramatic expansion of audiovisual communication. Television programs, films, online streaming platforms, educational videos, and digital media have become essential sources of information and entertainment for millions of people worldwide. In this context, audiovisual translation has emerged as a significant field of study within linguistics and translation studies.

One of the most widely used forms of audiovisual translation is subtitling. Subtitling involves the presentation of written text on the screen that reflects spoken dialogue and other relevant sound information from audiovisual materials. Subtitles allow viewers to understand the content of a film or video even if they do not understand the spoken language or cannot hear the audio.

Although subtitling initially developed as a practical tool for translating films into different languages, modern research demonstrates that it represents a complex process involving linguistic, technical, cognitive, and cultural factors. For this reason, the subtitling process can be considered a special scientific discipline within the broader framework of audiovisual translation.

Subtitling differs significantly from traditional written translation. While written translation typically allows the translator unlimited space and time, subtitles must fit within strict spatial and temporal constraints. Subtitles usually consist of two lines with a limited number of characters and remain visible on the screen for only a few seconds. As a result, subtitlers must apply specific linguistic strategies such as condensation, simplification, and reformulation.

The growing importance of global media distribution has further increased the demand for professional subtitling. Streaming services and

international film distribution require high-quality subtitles that ensure accurate and efficient communication across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

The main aim of this article is to analyze the subtitling process as a special scientific field. The study focuses on the theoretical foundations of subtitling, the stages of subtitle production, and the linguistic principles that guide subtitle creation. In addition, the research highlights the role of subtitling in improving accessibility for diverse audiences.

Literature Review

Research on audiovisual translation began to develop actively in the late twentieth century. Scholars such as **Henrik Gottlieb**, **Jorge Díaz Cintas**, **Frederic Chaume**, and **Jan Pedersen** have made significant contributions to the study of subtitling and other audiovisual translation techniques.

Henrik Gottlieb defines subtitling as the written representation of spoken language that appears synchronously with audiovisual material. According to his classification, subtitles can be divided into intralingual subtitles, interlingual subtitles, and bilingual subtitles.

Jorge Díaz Cintas and Aline Remael describe subtitling as a multimodal translation process in which linguistic information must be adapted to visual and temporal constraints. They emphasize that subtitles must be readable, synchronized with speech, and compatible with the visual elements of the film.

Another important aspect of subtitling research concerns the cognitive processes involved in subtitle reading. Studies have shown that viewers must simultaneously process three types of information when watching subtitled content: images, spoken dialogue, and written subtitles. Therefore, subtitles must be carefully designed to avoid cognitive overload.

In addition, recent research highlights the role of subtitling in promoting accessibility. Subtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing (SDH) include additional information about sound effects, music, and speaker identification. These subtitles play an important role in making audiovisual content accessible to viewers with hearing impairments.

Despite extensive research in Western countries, the scientific study of subtitling remains relatively underdeveloped in many regions. Therefore, further research is necessary to expand theoretical and practical knowledge in this field.

The Concept of Subtitling as a Scientific Discipline

Subtitling can be considered a special scientific discipline because it integrates several fields of knowledge. These include linguistics, translation studies, media studies, psychology, and information technology.

From a linguistic perspective, subtitling involves analyzing spoken language and transforming it into written text while preserving meaning. From a technological perspective, subtitle production requires specialized software and synchronization techniques. From a cognitive perspective, subtitling research examines how viewers read and understand subtitles while watching moving images.

The interdisciplinary nature of subtitling makes it a unique area of scientific study. Researchers analyze not only the linguistic aspects of subtitles but also their technical production, visual presentation, and communicative effectiveness.

The Stages of the Subtitling Process

The subtitling process consists of several stages that ensure the accuracy and effectiveness of subtitles.

1. Analysis of Audiovisual Content

The first stage involves analyzing the audiovisual material. The subtitler examines the dialogue, context, characters, and cultural references present in the film or video.

During this stage, the subtitler identifies important elements such as:

- spoken dialogue
- tone and emotion
- sound effects
- cultural references.

This analysis provides the foundation for accurate subtitle creation.

2. Transcription or Translation

The second stage involves creating the textual content of the subtitles. If the subtitles are intralingual, the spoken dialogue is transcribed into written text. If they are interlingual, the dialogue is translated into another language.

During this stage, the subtitler must ensure that the subtitles accurately convey the meaning of the original dialogue while remaining concise and readable.

3. Condensation and Adaptation

Because subtitles have limited space and time, it is often necessary to shorten or simplify the dialogue. This process is known as condensation.

For example:

Spoken dialogue: “I would like to express my sincere appreciation for your assistance.”

Subtitle:

“Thank you for your help.”

Condensation allows viewers to read subtitles quickly without missing visual information.

4. Synchronization

Synchronization involves aligning subtitles with the timing of the spoken dialogue. Each subtitle must appear and disappear at the appropriate moment.

Proper synchronization ensures that viewers can easily associate subtitles with the corresponding speech.

5. Technical Formatting

The final stage involves formatting the subtitles according to technical standards. This includes:

- determining the number of characters per line
- setting subtitle duration
- adjusting subtitle position on the screen.

These technical parameters ensure that subtitles remain clear and readable.

Discussion. The analysis demonstrates that subtitling is far more than a technical activity. It represents a complex process that requires linguistic competence, technological knowledge, and cultural awareness.

The subtitling process also reflects the interdisciplinary nature of modern translation studies. Researchers must consider linguistic structures, cognitive processing, visual perception, and technological tools.

Furthermore, the increasing demand for accessible media highlights the social importance of subtitling. As global media consumption continues to expand, the role of subtitles will become even more significant.

Conclusion. Subtitling is an essential component of modern audiovisual communication and should be considered a specialized scientific discipline within translation studies. The subtitling process involves several stages, including analysis, translation, condensation, synchronization, and technical formatting.

Effective subtitles must balance accuracy, readability, and timing while respecting the visual context of the audiovisual material. In addition to facilitating cross-linguistic communication, subtitles play a crucial role in promoting accessibility and inclusivity in media.

Further research in subtitling studies will contribute to improving subtitle quality and developing more effective methods of audiovisual translation.

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