



**CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF
SANTIAGO DE GUAYAQUIL**

**FACULTY OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES
SCHOOL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

TITLE OF PAPER

**Descriptive Study of Translator´s Skills and Competences Applicable to
Subtitling Processes for Specific Training Purposes at the School of
English Language of the Catholic University of Santiago de Guayaquil**

AUTHOR:

ANDREA MERCEDES VIZUETE HIDALGO

**SUBMITTED AS A REQUIREMENT FOR OBTAINING THE BACHELOR
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PROJECT ADVISOR

SARA RIVADENEIRA

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CERTIFICATION

We certify that this research project was presented by **Andrea Mercedes Vizquete Hidalgo** as a partial fulfillment for the requirements for the **Bachelor's Degree of English Language with a Minor in Translation.**

PROJECT ADVISOR

Sara Rivadeneira

DIRECTOR OF ACADEMIC PROGRAM

John González Ubilla, MSc.

Guayaquil, in the 20th day of March of 2017



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the School of English Language of the
Catholic University of Santiago de
Guayaquil

AUTHOR: ANDREA MERCEDES VIZUETE
HIDALGO SUBMITTED



ASA

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DEDICATION

I want to dedicate this project to my parents and sister because they are my guide and have shaped who I am and I will always be thankful for that. They have taught me what hard work really means and to always chase my dreams.

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LANGUAGE

GRADE

Rivadeneira Enríquez Sara Inés, MSc.

Project Advisor

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1- Introduction.....	1
1.1-Topic and Justification.....	1
2- Problem.....	2
2.1- Statement of the Problem.....	2
2.2- Research Questions.....	2
2.3- General and specific objectives.....	2
2.3.1- General Objective.....	2
2.3.2- Specific Objectives.....	3
2.4- Conceptual Framework.....	3
2.4.1- Translation.....	3
2.4.2- Translation Academic Programs.....	4
2.4.3- Translator´s Skills and Competences.....	5
2.4.4- Audiovisual Translation.....	6
2.4.5- Subtitling.....	6
2.4.6- The Subtitling Process.....	7
2.4.7- Features of Subtitles.....	8
2.4.8- History of Subtitling.....	10
2.4.9- Interlingual and Intralingual Subtitling.....	11
2.4.10- Subtitling and Dubbing.....	11
2.4.11- Multimedia Content.....	12
2.4.12- Subtitling Software.....	13
2.4.13- Mojibake.....	16
2.4.14- Translation Techniques.....	16
2.4.15- Localization.....	17
2.4.16- Transcreation.....	18
2.4.17- Quality Assurance.....	19
2.5- Methodological Approach.....	19
2.6- Research Instruments.....	20
2.7- Conclusions and Recommendations.....	24
3- Description of the Product.....	26
4-References.....	32
5- Appendix.....	35

Abstract

This paper pursues to map the skills and competences required by a translator aiming to work in the subtitling industry. These subtitling studies are meant to be at the disposal of the students who have completed their university studies at the School of English Language of the Catholic University of Santiago de Guayaquil and desire to boost their practical skills in multimedia translation. This descriptive study contains a description of all the skills and competences required by subtitlers who wish to work competently in this field. This map of skills and competences will help translators tackle the common problems that arise during the subtitling process and it will also help them become familiar with the field so they can perform successfully. The gathering and proposal of the necessary skills and competences was done through questionnaires answered by professional translators and subtitlers. The School of English Language is expected to design an academic curriculum based on this map of skills and competences and offer specialization studies for translation students who wish to become subtitlers. This program will provide them with all the necessary knowledge and training to work in the subtitling field.

Keywords: Map of Skills and Competences, Subtitling, Features of Subtitles, Audiovisual Translation, Adaptation, Transcreation, Quality Assurance.

1. Introduction

1.1 Topic and Justification

Subtitling allows access to foreign audiovisual contents such as movies, documentaries, TV series, and the like, to people who otherwise would not be able to retrieve and use foreign language audiovisual material. There is a thriving number of people working in this industry nowadays, and indeed translators are interested in this market as it is a good source of profits. The subtitling market is expanding as audiovisuals are placed on a prime preference in different countries and this material needs to be subtitled in order to reach a wider variety of audiences.

The aforesaid poses the fact that there needs to be a specialty since, although subtitling might seem to be embedded in translation, they are different fields that require professionals with different skills, abilities, and training. They are not interchangeable. Subtitling requires for professionals to know how to work within the time and space constraints, matching the subtitles to the voice, length of the scene and using different subtitling software, as well as expertise for transcreation, localization, quality assurance, among others. A translation professional will not succeed in the subtitling industry if he does not possess the required training, skills, and abilities.

The translation industry will continue to expand; therefore, there is a need for more translation professionals specialized in subtitling because this content needs to be available for different cultures. There is no subtitling specialty available in Ecuador; however, there are schools that offer translation programs but the students will acquire basic translation knowledge that will not be enough to work in subtitling.

2. Problem

2.1 Statement of the Problem

Although there are local schools that offer translation programs where students will acquire basic translation knowledge, there is no subtitling specialty available in Ecuador and the knowledge of translation proper will not be enough to work in subtitling because each field requires a different set of skills, abilities and knowledge from the translator.

2.2 Research Questions

What skills and competences are necessary for a translator to work in the subtitling field?

Why is it necessary for a translator to acquire special training to work in the subtitling industry?

What processes and software are inherent to the subtitling industry?

How is perceived among the translation students of the School of English Language of the Catholic University of Santiago de Guayaquil the implementation of a special subtitling training program?

2.3 General and Specific Objectives

2.3.1 General Objective

Map the skills and competences required by translators aiming to work in the subtitling field through the analysis of literature and actual performance of professional subtitlers and the software they use in the field to contribute to the development of a training program for this specific area of the translation field.

2.3.2 Specific Objectives

- Provide an insight into the different steps during the subtitling process and gain knowledge of the subtitling field.
- Design a profile with the set of skills and competences required by a subtitler.
- Gain detailed knowledge about the different features regarding the nature of subtitles.
- Analyze the different subtitling software used by professional subtitlers.
- Define what type of knowledge is required by translators who wish to work in the subtitling field.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

This research paper seeks to map the skills and competences required by a subtitler. In order to carry out the said mapping, it is important to gain insights into the world of translation and, more specifically, into the world of subtitling. The following concepts are a guideline for future readers of this paper to penetrate into the complex and compelling world of subtitling.

The following conceptual development is the result of exhaustive analysis through which it was determined that the subsequent concepts are of major importance for the proposed research project. The terms were thoroughly researched and analyzed so the population targeted herein will be able to understand the subtitling field and its many different features.

2.4.1 Translation

One of the most important terms to be defined in this research paper is translation proper since it is necessary in order to dive in to the world of translation and subtitling.

In the words of Munday, (2016):

“The process of translation between two different written languages involves the changing of an original written text (the source language or ST) in the original verbal language (the source language or SL) into a written text (the target text or TT) in a different verbal language (the target language or TL).”

Other authors (Bassnett, 2013; Venuti, 2013) offer a description of a wider range of processes that can be labeled as translation, but in general terms, when it comes to translation, it is necessary to bear in mind that the expert will be dealing with permanent (never transitory) text, whether oral or written.

2.4.2 Translation Academic Programs

Within academic programs offered at Ecuadorian universities, there are a few that offer minors in translation but none offer specialized training in the multimedia field. Among the universities that offer minors in translation are the School of English Language of the Catholic University of Santiago de Guayaquil and the San Francisco University of Quito.

However, there are other academic programs in the country, but they are specialized in linguistics. For example: Bachelor of English Teaching at Universidad Laica Vicente Rocafuerte, Bachelor of English Language and Linguistics of the Universidad de Guayaquil, and the School of English Language of the Catholic University of Santiago de Guayaquil which also offers a minor in English Teaching.

The above stated exemplifies why special training in different areas of translation is needed. If these schools that offer basic translation training introduced and implemented specialized training programs, this would help the Ecuadorian translation students to take a leap forward into gaining more knowledge and enhancing their techniques. If this was the case, translation students would be trained in the subtitling field, learn about the translation techniques used for subtitles, gain knowledge about audiovisual content and translation, and subtitling processes (“Subtítulos profesionales para cine y video en Quito, Ecuador,” 2016).

2.4.3 Translator's Skills and Competences

Translation as a whole requires for professionals to obtain a particular skills and competences during their basic BA translation training. According to Lafeber (2012) the set of skills and competences can be classified as follows:

- **Knowledge for comprehension:** This first level includes knowledge and understanding of the source culture and language and also the varieties within the source language and finally the subject the translator has to tackle in the document.
- **Analytical Skills:** This includes the translator's abilities to understand complex topics, manage new topics and information, detect inconsistencies, contradictions or errors and make sure that the target text is understood by the target audience.
- **Target-Text Production Skills and Knowledge:** This third level includes knowledge of punctuation, spelling and grammar rules of the target language. It also includes the competence to transfer idioms from one language into another and to produce a text that is coherent and flows smoothly even when the source text does not. The translator also needs the skills to translate the message with the proper tone and register intended in the source text.
- **Research Skills:** In this fourth level the translator needs to be able to research sources, understand the topic in its entirety, check facts, and look up and use the proper terminology to render a translation into the target language.
- **Computer Skills:** One of the most important skills a translator needs to have is to type fast and precisely, work with different computer software, manage translation databases and the use of CAT and tools.
- **Other Skills:** This level includes complying with the requests made by the client, working under pressure, explaining the translator choices that the client will not understand, and following instructions.

As explained above, translation is a complex process and it requires for the translation professional to have a specific set of skills and competences. So, learning and speaking a particular language such as English, is not sufficient to render

translations accurately and faithfully. Furthermore, this does not mean that a speaker of the target language is qualified to translate.

2.4.4 Audiovisual Translation

According to Chaume (2013):

“Audiovisual translation is an academic term that covers both well-established and new ground-breaking linguistic and semiotic transfers like dubbing, subtitling, surtitling, respeaking, audiosubtitling, voice-over, simultaneous interpreting at film festivals, free-commentary and goblin translation, subtitling for the deaf and the hard of hearing, audiodescription, fansubbing and fandubbing”.

Audiovisual translation is also referred to as multimedia translation. It is a specialized field of translation that deals with the transfer of multimedia contents such as movies, documentaries or TV series into another language or culture. This transfer process involves the use of different software and electronic systems in order to produce the product required (Chaume, 2013, p. 105)

2.4.5 Subtitling

According to Díaz-Cintas & Remael (2014):

“Subtitling may be defined as a translation practice that consists of presenting a written text, generally on the lower part of the screen, that endeavors to recount the original dialogue of the speakers, as well as the discursive elements that appear in the image (letters, inserts, graffiti, inscriptions, placards and the like), and the information that is contained on the soundtrack (songs, voices off)”

Subtitling comprises a different set of skills and characteristics from any other kind of translation (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2014, p.8), which is the reason why a translator needs to attain specific training as the tasks of a translator and a subtitler are not

interchangeable. The fact that subtitling is, in a general sense, a translation practice, does not imply that a translator possesses the necessary skills and competences to work in the subtitling industry.

2.4.6 The Subtitling Process

Subtitling has its own rules and specifications that differ from other different translation practices. One of the most important aspects about subtitling is that it entails time and space constraints that, if done incorrectly, will affect the final product. The subtitler must translate the text itself and also think about the time and space he has for each line of dialogue.

Sanchez (2004) divides the subtitling process into nine phases:

- **Pre-Translation:** Translation of the entire dialogue in the script before generating the subtitles.
- **Adaptation:** Division and adjustments of the previously translated text into subtitle units.
- **TC in / TC out:** Determine the time in which each subtitle unit ends and begins.
- **Coding or Spotting:** Placing all the subtitles in the TC in and TC out.
- **LTC: Linear Time Code:** This part of the process is done on an audio channel.
- **VITC: Vertical Interval Time Code:** This part of the subtitling process is done on the image and within the time lapse between each frame.
- **Simulation:** This part of the process involves watching the movie back with the inserted subtitles.
- **Import:** Transforming the adapted text into the suitable subtitle format.
- **Export:** Transforming the subtitles into text format.

2.4.7 Features of Subtitles

One of the most important characteristics of subtitling is that it maintains the original audio of the multimedia work (films, TV series, documentaries, etc.). The subtitlers must select different strategies and techniques to maintain the right balance between the audio track and the subtitles that appear on the screen.

Diaz Cintas (2013) presents three levels of considerations when working on subtitles and some of them differ according to the country or region. The levels of consideration as described as follows:

- **Spatial Considerations:** There is no specific length of time for which the subtitles have to appear and remain on screen. Subtitles are usually shown at the bottom of the screen horizontally, but in Japan they appear vertically. One of the most important characteristics when it comes to spatial considerations is that subtitles cannot contain more than two lines of text. A great part of professional subtitles use the same font type without serifs, such as Helvetica or Arial. The maximum number of characters allowed per line, which includes blank spaces and typographical signs, has remained between 35 and 39 for languages that share the Roman alphabet.

Some languages like Chinese and Japanese permit between 12 and 16 characters and the maximum amount of characters for Cyrillic and Arabic languages is 35. However, there are professional subtitling programs that have changed from a monospaced font to a non-monospaced one with a variety in width. Because of this change in the size and font being used, it means that the subtitler can write much more depending on the space available for the subtitles. That is the reason why it is common nowadays for subtitles to have 50 or 60 characters per line. The Internet has certainly influenced subtitles. One change is that subtitles can occupy even five lines on the screen, but this is mostly seen online.

- **Temporal Considerations:** This level of considerations includes a synchronization process known by professional subtitlers as spotting, cueing or timing. This part of the process can be done by the translator or by technicians who are familiar with the subtitling programs. This level has to do with the audience's appreciation of the film, TV series or documentary. It

involves placing the subtitles at the exact moment when the person starts speaking and removing them once the person has finished speaking. When the subtitles linger on screen, it can become confusing for the audience to understand who is speaking.

Subtitlers have to use an eight-digit time code that defines the hours, minutes and seconds. Thus, allowing the subtitles to be inserted accurately. There are some recommendations according to the maximum and minimum limit of duration of the subtitles on screen. The maximum time allowed is six seconds, especially for long dialogues, to ensure the audience can read the two lines of subtitles. The minimum time recommended is one second for short remarks.

- **Linguistic Considerations and Translation Techniques:** Regarding this level of considerations, the subtitles are expected to be semantically correct and at the same time adhere to the time and space constraints. The subtitlers are supposed to recount for the original dialogue and also transmit the intended message. When the dialogues on screen are short sentences or phrases, they do not present the subtitler with problems. On the other hand, problems arise when the characters have long dialogues and they deliver them quickly. That is the reason why subtitlers opt for a technique called reduction. Reduction is divided into total and partial reduction. Sometimes subtitlers opt for one over the other; they must remember to capture the essential message of what is being said without losing important and particular details.

Amateur subtitlers need to use the reduction technique carefully because if the dialogue is extensive, but the rendering of the subtitles is short, the audience will wonder if what they are reading is indeed what was said. One recommendation for subtitlers that use this technique, especially those who work into or out of a well-known language such as English, is to use words that are similar in both languages. Another important aspect of subtitles is segmentation. The subtitler has to have the ability to know when to stop each fragment of the subtitle. He also needs to ensure that the subtitles are coherent and match with the grammar of the target language because most of the times the audience cannot go back to reread what was said earlier. The golden rule for subtitlers is to make sure they are understood in the short

period they appear on screen. The optimal result would be that each subtitle is clear, not ambiguous, and a complete sentence.

2.4.8 History of Subtitling

As retrieved from the Video Caption Corporation (2014) website, the movie industry has been through several important changes over the years. The first movies that were made were silent in black and white; this means that people understood the actors' intentions by their gestures and facial expressions. People involved in the movie making process explored for new methods to communicate dialogue to audiences. They started to use intertitles in 1903. This new method made translating for international audiences much easier. The translators' job was to replace the small title cards that were placed on screen and replace them with new cards that would contain the text in the target language. This method made it possible for foreign audiences to enjoy the film.

This is how the idea of subtitles was created. There was no need to use intertitles once movies with sound were invented. People were able to hear the dialogue, but audiences overseas were not able to understand. One of the possibilities filming studios considered was to shoot multiple scenes in different languages, but this was costly and time consuming. They also considered dubbing the film, while it is a technique often used for movies to reach international markets; it is also a costly and complex process. So, film producers decided to start using subtitles again, but instead of placing the title cards between scenes, they would position the translation at the top of the screen so people could watch the movie and read the dialogue in their native language at the same time.

Producers opted for this technique because they would save more money and the movie would be ready for screening in different countries in less time. The one thing they could not decide on was where to place the translation. The name "subtitles" was given because the titles (lines of translated script) were positioned at the bottom of the screen. Subtitles were what made movies accessible to foreign audiences and it is still a standard option for film distribution companies.

2.4.9 Interlingual and Intralingual Subtitling

There are two different types of subtitling: intralingual and interlingual subtitling. Intralingual subtitling is aimed at deaf and hearing impaired people and interlingual subtitling is aimed at foreign language audiences.

Matamala & Orero (2013) present their opinion about intralingual subtitling:

“Traditional modalities such as dubbing, voice-over or subtitling are used next to newer media accessibility modalities such as audio description, sign language and subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing, which entail intersemiotic transfer processes that go well beyond traditional linguistic or even cultural definitions of translation”

One of the most challenging aspects of intralingual translation is to transfer sounds and noises made by the characters on screen because they are also part of the experience and message of the video. The most important aspect of this kind of translation is transferring from a verbal to a non-verbal system. As it is a complex process, it would become difficult to accomplish complete equivalence because the subtitler would be working with two different and complex codes.

Interlingual subtitling is much more straightforward. It involves translating a text from the source language into the target language while synchronizing the text to the dialogue. Interlingual subtitling does not only include speech, but also song lyrics, telephone conversations, commentaries, written signs and newspaper headlines (Linde & Kay, 2016, p. 1).

2.4.10 Subtitling and Dubbing

There needs to be a distinction between these two fields of translation because they are very different from each other. While both of them derive from audiovisual translation, they cannot be considered alike.

According to Chaume (2013):

“Dubbing consists of translating and lip-syncing the script of an audiovisual text, which is then performed by actors directed by a dubbing director and, where available, with advice from a linguistic consultant or dubbing assistant.”

Dubbing is made in order to give the impression to the audience that the actors on screen are speaking in the target language. It is a long and time-consuming process, but it is preferred in several countries over subtitling. It also involves voice actors, several translators and a large budget. That is the reason why producers choose subtitling.

When comparing subtitling to dubbing, the former is a much simpler process because the translated text is presented to the audience while the actors are speaking in the source language and the latter comprises a complex process that requires a larger group of people involved in the project.

One of the main similarities between subtitling and dubbing is that they are often localized for a specific audience. Translators have to adapt the material to fit into a particular target language because both of them are also cultural processes.

However, the final decision on whether to use subtitling or dubbing in movies is going to depend on the producers and most importantly on the target audience. As (Chaume, 2013) points out, for some European and Asian countries (France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Spain and Turkey, or China and Japan, among others) dubbing is the most widespread form of audiovisual translation. In the end, the decision will be made based on the preference of the country. People cannot judge and state that one is better than the other because they are two different kinds of translation that require a different set of skills and competences.

2.4.11 Multimedia Content

Subtitling is a field that covers a wide scope. People sometimes have the incorrect idea that subtitling is limited to movies and films. With the development of technology and the internet, people have more access to the content available on different

platforms. That is one of the reasons why the scope of subtitling has widened and it covers a much bigger range. According to Perez-Gonzalez (2014) “In addition to films and drama, subtitling is gaining popularity as the method of choice for the translation of utilitarian audiovisual texts, including promotional corporate films, videogames or documentaries”.

As the scope of subtitling is growing, there is a need to have more translators specialized in the field. When people refer to subtitling multimedia content, it is important to understand what this concept comprises. It can cover from films, TV series, tourist videos, promotional videos, documentaries or videogames. Any type of visual content that people want to make available for different countries and audiences can be subtitled.

2.4.12 Subtitling Software

According to Díaz-Cintas (2008) the most popular subtitling software are: EZTitles, Fab, Spot, Poliscript, Titlevision, WinCaps and Subtitle Workshop.

EZTitles

According to the information retrieved from the EZTitles website, this software helps subtitlers complete their tasks fast and it is also very precise. It is also one of the easiest software and that is the reason why subtitlers prefer it. It allows subtitlers to write, inset and spot subtitles. Subtitlers can also access their account from any computer and continue working on their projects.

Among its features are autocorrect, spellcheckers dictionaries and project templates. They also have different programs called EZConvert, EZ 3D Titles and EZTitles Plug-ins. EZConvert allows users to change the format of subtitlers. E.g. they can take the subtitles from a DVD format and place them in a Blu-ray format. EZ 3Dtitles allows users to use 3D subtitles in 2D formats. EZTitles Plug-ins gives users the opportunity to load and encode subtitles in the video.

Fab

According to the information retrieved from the FAB (Teletext and Subtitling Systems) website, it is a subtitling system that makes possible for users to produce, convert, prepare and insert subtitles. One of the best features of Fab is that it grants users the opportunity to create subtitle databases. The company has over fifteen years of experience in the market and its programs is used different places all over the world such as, France, Germany, Madrid, Vienna, Zurich, Geneva, Brussels and Lisbon.

Spot

According to the information retrieved from the Spot Software website, this software has been developed by subtitlers since 1997. It is one of the most affordable subtitling systems, possesses many different features and it is user-friendly. It has become one of the most popular subtitling systems in Europe. It allows users to edit, time and reformat subtitles. It supports several video files. Subtitlers are also able to import and export subtitles from a wide range of formats.

Poliscript

According to the information retrieved from the Poliscript Subtitling Software website, it allows users to create and insert subtitlers. Among its many features are the following: subtitling for different formats, edit WYSIWYG texts in the video window, dual audio system, reading speed indicators, spell checkers for different languages, subtitle time line bar and a status bar of the current project.

It supports many different languages such as Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Greek and Thai.

Titlevision

According to the information retrieved from the TitleVision website, it was developed in 1996. It was created by professional subtitlers and it has numerous different features such as: video conversion, auto correct, spell checkers, multi-lingual support, automatic detection of scene change, export and import subtitles and an

automatic tool that splits subtitles. One of the most important features about Titlevision is that it allows subtitlers to repair damaged files.

WinCaps

According to the information retrieved from the WINCAPS Q4 Subtitling Software website, it is a subtitle creation program that allows the subtitler to do his work effectively and efficiently. One of the most important features of this software is that it supports a range of different file formats and media types. As soon as the subtitler starts working on a new project, the software automatically produces speech markers, audio level and indicates the change of shot in the video.

It allows subtitlers to change styles and fonts to meet their clients' needs. It makes it possible for subtitlers to import and export file formats, time subtitler according to the change of shots, font change, spell checker, vertical time line to help subtitlers reduce eye movement and supports languages such as English, French and German.

Subtitle Workshop

According to the information retrieved from the Subtitle Workshop website, it is a free subtitling software that supports a wide range of languages. It is a complete, efficient and convenient tool for subtitlers. It allows subtitlers to create, edit and convert subtitles.

It is user friendly and supports a wide range of subtitle formats. Subtitles can be personalized according to the needs of the client. It checks and corrects subtitles automatically and allows translators to personalize this feature according to their preference. It also reverts the text, divides subtitle lines and checks for punctuation. This last feature is very important for languages written from right to left.

2.4.13 Mojibake

Plagiarism is common among university students and even professionals. University students sometimes make use of papers that are available online and they write their names on it because they have too many classes and not enough time to write all their paper. When it comes to subtitling, something similar happens. Subtitlers want to protect their work from people that might want make it look as it was their own work. Mojibake is a program that protects people's work against plagiarism.

As retrieved from the paper Ethical and Unethical Methods of Plagiarism Prevention in Academic Writing: Mojibake is a word that comes from Japanese and means transformation. In its literal translation it means character transformation. This program can be used in documents that have several layers such as PDF. One of the characteristics of a PDF document is that it has two layers. The first one is the visual layer, which is visible for the person that reads the document and the printer. This first layer is an image. The second layer is the text itself and contains the words or text of the visual layer. When using PDG documents, it is possible to preserve the visual layer and transform the textual layer into characters. A plagiarism software will check the textual layer and not the first layer, visual layer, for plagiarism. This is very helpful to prevent people from using PDF documents from someone else and claiming them as their own.

2.4.14 Translation Techniques

The translation process is very complex and demanding. The translator has to resort to different techniques to ensure that the final product is linguistically correct and 'feels' as if it is an original text rather than a translated version. Translation techniques are varied and the use of each one is going to depend on a number of different factors. These factors can be cultural, linguistic, based on the translator's choice, based on the audience or the purpose of the translation (Aranda, 2007).

Bosco (n.d.) makes a distinction between the different translation techniques available. This author states they can be classified into direct and oblique translation

techniques. Direct translations techniques are used when there are concepts, words or ideas in the source language that can be transferred into the target language and the outcome will be understood by the readership. Oblique translation techniques are used when concepts, elements or structures in a sentence cannot be rendered from the source language into the target language without the text itself being altered or modified to fit the grammatical structure and stylistic elements of the language.

The use of translation techniques is very important for subtitlers because they have to compensate for any losses that occur during the translation process. They have to be experts at using them in order to carry the original meaning and message from the source language into the target language.

2.4.15 Localization

Localization is a translation process in which a text or material is adapted for a foreign audience. This process includes rendering the words from one language into another. It also includes inspecting the rendering of the text on a semantical level to make sure it is understandable for the target audience. The final product has to “work” both functionally and linguistically in the target culture. (Lionbridge, 2012)

Localization is a very complex process because the translator has to render the text and be certain that the words and vocabulary he is using are going to be understood by the target audience. Examples of localization worth mentioning are the movies, TV series and documentaries translated in Spain. They adapt the language and vocabulary for their own culture because that is the way they prefer it. That is the reason why the titles of movies differ greatly from Spain than in Latin America. One example is the movie “Home Alone”. In Spain, it was translated as “Solo en Casa” and it was rendered as “Mi pobre angelito” for the Latin American culture. Another colorful example is the movie “Wedding Crashers”. It was translated as “De boda en boda” for Spain and as “Los caza novias” for Latin American countries. One final example is the movie “Die Hard”. It was translated as “Jungla de Cristal” for Spain and as “Duro de Matar” for Latin America.

2.4.16 Transcreation

According to Stibbe (2009): “Transcreation is about taking a concept in one language and completely recreating it in another language” Transcreation is a term that is used frequently in the translation field. It can be considered as a technique that translators use when they come across a concept in one language that does not exist in the target language.

This technique involves a great amount of creativity from the translator or subtitler because he is creating something entirely new for the target audience. This technique is very useful for subtitlers because sometimes they need to create a completely new title for a movie. This happens when a title or a concept is deeply embedded in the source culture that the translation will not be understood by the target culture. A good example to further explain this concept is jokes. Most of the times jokes are rooted to the source culture and the subtitler performs literal translation the meaning is completely lost and it is not going to have the same effect in the target audience. That is the reason why subtitler opt for using this technique and they create a new joke that is going to have the same effect in the target audience as it did with the source audience. The following example was taken from the movie Shrek:

English version

Donkey: That’s right, fool! Now I’m a flying talking donkey. You might have seen a house fly and maybe even a super fly. But I bet you have never seen a donkey fly.

Spanish version

Burro: ¡Así es, tonto! Ahora soy un burro que habla y vuela ¿Han visto como su dinero vuela? Como caperucita y su abuela, pero a que nunca han visto como un burro vuela.

2.4.17 Quality Assurance

According to Matis (2012):

“In the translation process Quality Assurance (QA) usually takes place at the end of the workflow. It includes all of the actions and processes that are implemented to ensure that the project is totally keeping with the customer’s requirements. The QA phase entails checking the linguistic quality of the translation and, in some cases, an evaluation of several technical criteria.”

This is a phase of the translation process that needs to be done by every translator whether they are subtitlers or not. It is very important and will ensure the quality of the final product that will be delivered to the client. The subtitler can read the translated text over and make sure it is grammatically and semantically correct. Another way in which the process can be done is by watching over the movie or film and make sure the characters fit the criteria of space and time on screen and double-check for mistranslations.

2.5 Methodological Approach

When writing a research project, it is important to specify both the approach and the method that will be used during the process. It is essential because it will help the writer of the project to focus on his goals and the information he wants to convey. This is helpful to organize ideas and decide what relevant information should be included in the work. The method is the way in which the final work will be presented to the audience. The approach is about how the research will be managed and which tools will be used in order to obtain the desired outcome.

The philosophical framework chosen for this research paper is called constructivism. This philosophical framework is about building upon experience on a trial and error basis, when required. Based on work in multiple fields such as psychology, science, philosophy and biology, learning and knowledge are not supposed to be transmitted from one person to another nor needs be discovered, but it arises from humans who are part of a meaning-making process in both social and cultural aspects (Fosnot, 2013). This method is particularly useful for this project as it aims to develop a map

of skills and competences needed for translators who wish to work in the subtitling industry.

It is also important to define the approach that will be used in the project to comply with the stated objectives. Both the quantitative and the qualitative approaches are used in this project. The quantitative approach helped collect and analyze data out of surveys through which particular preferences were polled among the students taking translation studies at the School of English Language. The results are retrieved in numbers and help support the research proposal and product as valid. The qualitative approach involves collecting data from different sources such as case studies, focus groups, interviews or questionnaires (Wimmer & Dominick, 2010). In this case, it is used to obtain information about specific translation practices regarding the field of multimedia translation. It was necessary to use both approaches for this research paper so as to collect numerical data to provide support and also opinions from professionals to develop the map of skills and competences.

2.6 Research Instruments

In order to create a product for this research, three different questionnaires for interviews and an online survey were devised. The first method chosen for this research paper was questionnaires. This term can refer to a set of previously prepared questions answered by participants on their own or to a set of questions asked by an interviewer (Brace, 2008). An important part of the project was to find both translators and subtitlers willing to answer a set of questions with the objective of discovering if it was necessary to have a specialization in subtitling and what skills and competences are necessary to work in this industry.

The first questionnaire was for professional translators. They were asked different questions about subtitling. The second questionnaire was for people working in the subtitling industry. The final questionnaire was aimed at people who had acquired special training in subtitling. The questionnaires were the most relevant because they helped shape the product. The translators and subtitlers who answered the questionnaires are experts in the field; therefore, they have the experience and

knowledge of the field to describe which skills and competences are necessary for the job.

Finally, an online survey was used in this research project to poll a sample target population about the need of specific training in the area proposed in the study. Surveys were also used to gather information to answer to the questions posted in this research paper. According to (Fowler Jr, 2013) "The purpose of the survey is to produce statistics, that is, quantitative or numerical descriptions about some aspects of the study population." This survey was taken by the students of the School of English Language of the Catholic University of Santiago de Guayaquil. This survey was important because it helped determine if the translation students thought a set of skills and competences is necessary to work in the subtitling industry. It also helped determine whether or not the student thought the implementation of a special subtitling training program was a good choice.

Results of the online survey answered by the students of the School of English Language with a minor in translation

The results of the survey were obtained after approximately four weeks and recount the preferences of twenty-four students.

The objective of the first question of the survey was to discover whether the students showed interest in the topic of this research paper and whether they considered a translator should acquire special training to work in the subtitling industry. 100% of the students surveyed answered "yes" to this question, indicating that people within the translation field believe it is not advisable for translators to work in the subtitling industry without having obtained special training in the field.

The second question was aimed at obtaining an answer to whether or not the students agreed that a subtitler needs to acquire a different set of skills and competences than a translator. 95.8% of the students answered "yes", which is consistent with the topic proposed in this research paper. As they are involved in the world of translation and have knowledge on how it works, they are aware that the skills and competences they acquire during their translation training at university are not enough to work in the subtitling industry.

The third question was intended to answer one of the misconceptions people have about translation. People think that once a translator has his degree he can multitask and work as an interpreter or a subtitler. 91.7% of the students answered that “no” when they were asked if they believed basic translation knowledge was enough to work in the subtitling industry; thus, agreeing with what this research paper is attempting to probe.

The objective of the fourth question was to determine the success of translators with basic translation knowledge in the subtitling industry. 91.7% of the students said that translators would not be successful in the subtitling industry with the basic translation knowledge they obtain during their university training. Because the majority of the students have translation experience due to their internships, they know that the tasks and challenges a translator and a subtitler have to face in their professional exercise are not interchangeable or similar.

The fifth question of the survey was aimed at identifying the need for a subtitling academic program. All the students who answered the survey chose “yes”; thus suggesting that one of the objectives stated in this research paper is assertively pursued. This indicates that obtaining a bachelor’s degree in translation will not be enough because translators who are aiming to work in the subtitling industry need to undergo special training to acquire a different set of skills, competences and knowledge that they will not attain in a translation program.

The goal of the sixth question was to detect whether or not it is necessary to have more translators specialized in the field of subtitling. 95.8% of the surveyed students answered “yes”. They do think it is necessary for more translators to specialize in this field because subtitling is expanding more and more every day and movies, TV series, documentaries, etc., are reaching wider audiences that did not have access to this content before. As the field of subtitling expands, the need to have more professional subtitlers is also increasing.

The objective of the seventh question was to determine whether it is necessary to offer an academic program for subtitling in Ecuador. 95.8% percent of the students surveyed answered “yes” to this question. They do think it is important for translators to acquire special training in the subtitling field; especially in Ecuador where people

have misconceptions about learning languages and about translation. They believe that if someone knows or can speak a language he is automatically qualified to translate, produce subtitles or even interpret. The reality is that each field is different and people who work in them have a different set of skills, competences and knowledge that can only be acquired through specialized training.

The goal of the eighth question of the survey was to determine, based on the previously answered questions, if the subtitling field is profitable for translators. 95.8% of the students surveyed chose “yes”. As it was mentioned previously, movies are reaching wider and more culturally-diverse audiences and there are not many professional subtitlers, so the ones who do have a degree in subtitling earn a lot more money than the ones who are not professionals in the field.

The objective of the ninth and final question of the survey was to determine if the students would be interested in pursuing a subtitling program if it were offered by the School of English Language of the Catholic University of Santiago de Guayaquil. 95.8% of the students answered “yes”. This indicates the necessity for the topic presented herein as the vast majority of the students would choose a subtitling academic program if it was available for them. These results confirm the need there is in Ecuador for the subtitling field to be exploited.

2.7 Conclusions and Recommendations

-The set of skills and competences required by translators and subtitlers vary greatly from one another. The set of skills and competences required by a subtitler are: linguistic skills, technological skills, technical skills, cultural competence and translation skills. If all the skills and competences aforementioned are implemented in a special subtitling academic program, they will help shape professionals that will become successful in the field. They will possess the necessary tools and knowledge to tackle the problems that might arise during the subtitling process. It is recommended for translators desiring to work in the subtitling field to seek specialized training by means of courses or a specialization.

-Translation academic programs available in Ecuador provide students with the knowledge, abilities and skills to successfully translate documents from and into different fields. If translators want to work in the subtitling industry, their previously acquired knowledge will be inefficient in this particular area of translation. Each different area of the translation field requires professionals to have a different set of skills and competences. That is the reason why it is important for a translator to acquire special training to work in the subtitling industry. This issue can be solved through the implementation of a subtitling training program that will make it possible there to be more specialized professionals in the field.

-There are many subtitling software programs available for subtitlers. The ones they decide to work with will depend on personal preferences and the complexity of usage of the language into or out of which they are going to produce the subtitles. It is very important for subtitlers to learn to manage them efficiently and make use of all the features each software programs possesses. The most popular subtitling software programs are: EZTitles, Fab, Spot, Poliscript, Titlevision, WinCaps and Subtitle Workshop. This project proposes training in all these different programs. Subtitlers need to learn to use them properly because the success of the final product will depend on their correct usage.

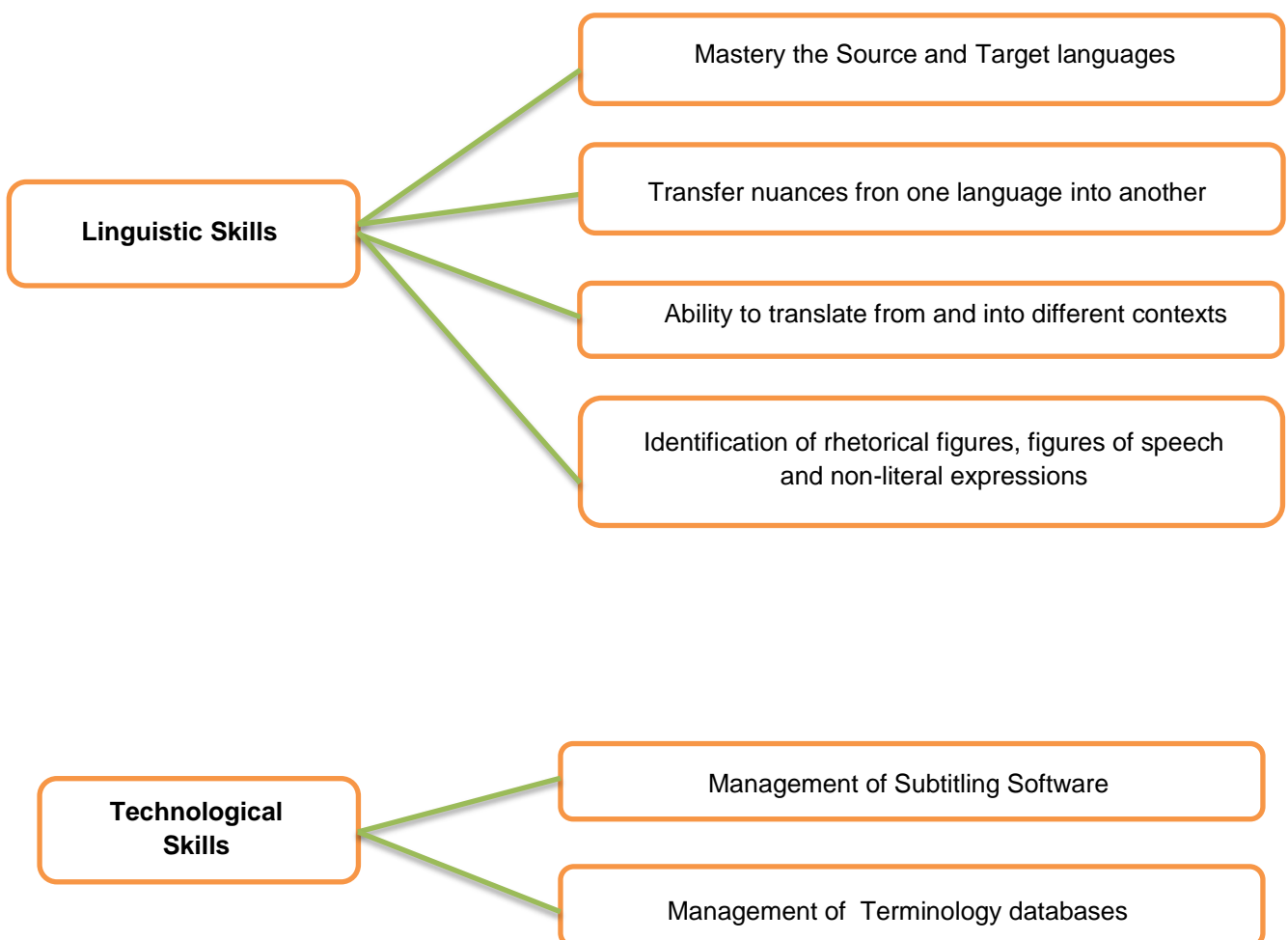
-The need of a special subtitling training program in the Catholic University of Santiago de Guayaquil is perceived to be very important by the translation students of the School of English Language. The vast majority of the students surveyed agree

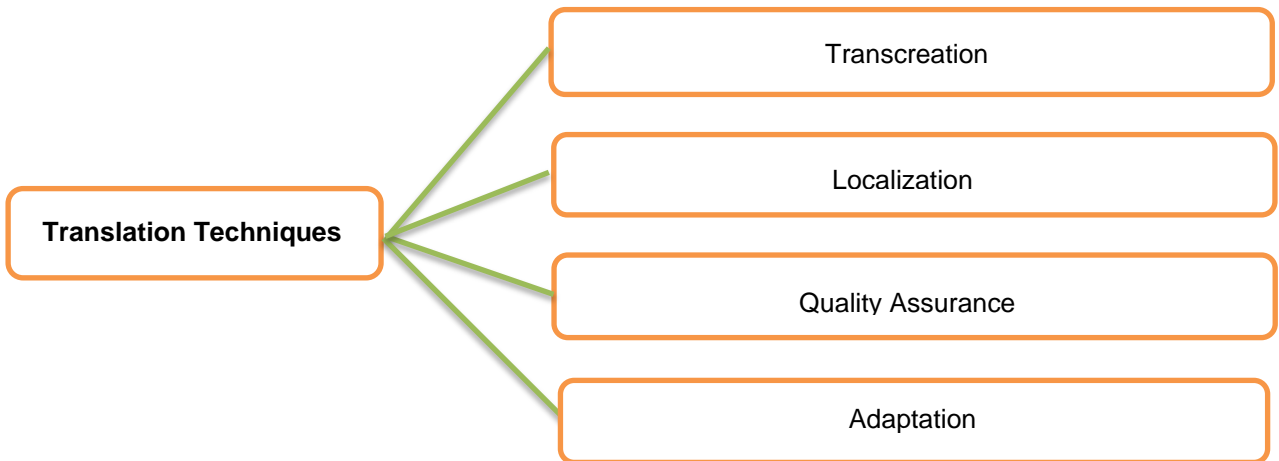
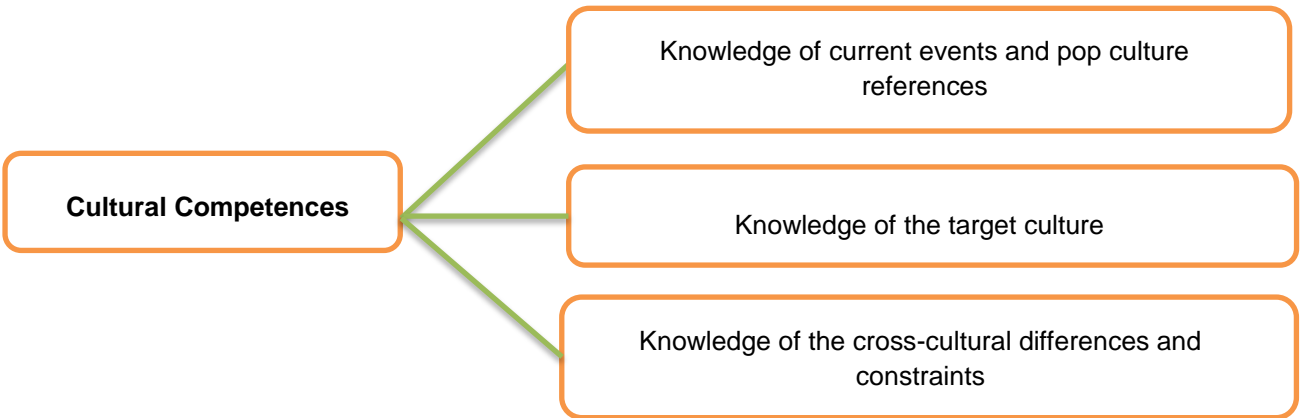
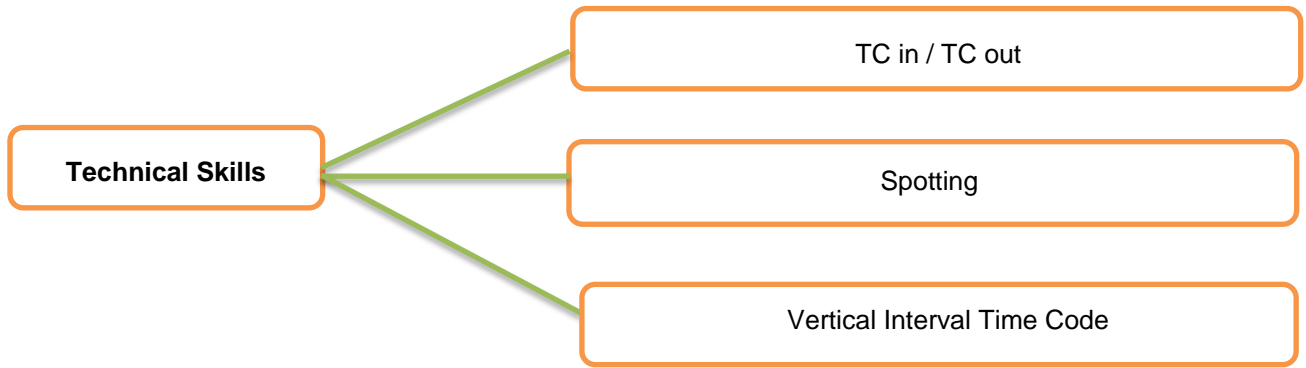
that a special training program is important because they will acquire the necessary skills and competences to work successfully in the subtitling industry. They also agree that subtitling is a profitable field for translators and there is a need for there to be one in Ecuador. This issue can be solved by implementing a special training program in which translation students will obtain the necessary skills and knowledge to become efficient subtitlers.

-The subtitling industry has expanded and it is no longer associated only with films, TV series and documentaries. The contents that can be subtitled are unlimited. For example, promotional videos, tourist videos, ads, videogames or promotional corporate films, etc. These contents are available in Ecuador, but there are no trained professionals that can work on them. There are promotional videos and tourist videos about Ecuador that are not seen by international audiences because there is no specialized translation available in this country for people to be able to perform such a task. This issue can be solved by creating a subtitling academic program in the School of English Language of the Catholic University of Santiago de Guayaquil. This university already provides students with a minor in translation and a specialization in subtitling will enable students to further enhance their training and adapt it specifically to the subtitling field. This training program will allow them to develop the set of skills, abilities and knowledge required by subtitlers.

3. Description of the Product

The information for the design of translator's skills and competences to be covered in a subtitling training program was retrieved from the questionnaires answered by translators and subtitlers from different countries. The map or curriculum comprises 5 important aspects to train new and experienced translators in this area. These aspects are: linguistic skills, technological skills, technical skills, cultural competence, and translation skills.





A translator undertaking the proposed training program will require and achieve the following skills and competences:

-Linguistic Skills: at this point of the training proposal, translators are assumed to possess a proficiency level of English which can be enhanced with the practice provided in a continuing education training program. Candidates are thought to be graduates from a Bachelor's Degree in Translation or similar. They are meant to enrich their skills as they focused on the needs of the subtitling industry. The training offered will allow them to add to their knowledge of the Source and Target Languages, learn to transfer nuances from one language into another, learn to identify and properly translate rhetorical figures, figures of speech and non-literal expressions and learn the ability to render from and into different contexts.

- **Mastery of the Source and Target Languages:** This part of the academic program is linked to the previous item. They also need to expand their vocabulary because of the content they are going to be working within the subtitling industry. If they focus solely on films, each of them will be set in a different field or environment and the subtitler needs to be prepared to deal with it. The subtitler needs to be proficient in both the source and target languages and be able to understand the message and transfer it from one language into another.
- **Transfer nuances from one language into another:** This part of the program has to do with register variation. They need to be proficient and verify the translation is adequate for the target audience. Being proficient and mastering both languages is very important for translators because that will help them make informed decisions to enhance the quality of the final product. Translators need learn to differentiate the numerous levels of registers in both languages.
- **Identification of rhetorical figures, figures of speech and non-literal expressions:** This is a very important skill translators should acquire. Some translators become proficient with the grammatical aspect of the language but fail when it comes to identifying figures or speech or non-literal expressions. These aspects are the ones that sometimes make the difference in a phrase or text. They will be able to learn to identify them and properly translate them from the source language into the target language.

- Ability to translate from and into different contexts: As it was mentioned before, each film, TV show or documentary is a different world that the subtitler needs to fully understand. Each of these will contain different terminology from different fields. E.g. there are legal TV shows, medical TV shows, scientific movies or documentaries and the subtitler needs to spot each of these words and make an appropriate rendering from one language into the other.

-Technological Skills: This is one of the most important skills subtitlers will acquire during the academic program. They will learn to manage the subtitling software that is mostly used in the field and by the industry. According to the information retrieved from the questionnaires, the most relevant subtitling software programs are: Eztitles, Titlvision, Sub Machine, WinCaps, Qu4ntum, FAB Subtitler, Spot Subtitling System, Subtitle Edit, Subtitle Workshop, Aegisub and Subbits. The ones that they recommend most for students training for the industry are Eztitles and Aegisub. Subtitlers will learn to use the subtitling software and manage terminology databases.

- Management of Subtitling Software: Subtitlers need to know how to program titles for a video and decide when and for how long they are to appear on screen. There are various subtitling programs available online and each one has its own different features. Students also need to learn to modify and delete subtitles once all of them have been encrypted in the video.
- Management of Terminology Databases: As mentioned above, each new material the subtitlers work on is to be set in a different environment or deals with a different field and topic. The subtitler must learn to manage terminology databases from different fields. This will help them further enhance the quality of the final product.

-Technical Skills: These skills are also key to developing a career in the subtitling field. They are the core skills a subtitler must possess in order to work successfully in the subtitling industry. These skills are the following: adaptation, TC in / TC out, Spotting and Vertical Interval Time Code.

- TC in / TC out: Subtitlers must be able to determine by watching the video and translated dialogue where each subtitle should begin and end. This is a very technical aspect of subtitling because they need to give the audience the

time to understand the message while keeping in mind that subtitles cannot be left on the screen once the dialogue is over.

- Spotting: This part of the process is linked to the management of subtitling software, which was mentioned earlier. Subtitlers must learn to place each one of the translated subtitle units in the video.
- Vertical Interval Time Code: Subtitlers must watch over the video and verify that all subtitles appear and disappear when they are supposed to and that they meet the criteria of character number and length per line.

-Cultural Competences: As it was stated in the interviews by translators and subtitlers, it is very important to have knowledge about the target culture because by checking cultural references or constraints regarding the source and target culture, the quality of the final product will be enhanced. There are multiple differences between cultures and countries and the subtitler needs to be aware of them so he can translate properly. The cultural competences a subtitler must have are: knowledge of current events and pop culture references, knowledge of the target culture, and knowledge of the differences and constraints across cultures.

- Knowledge of current events and pop culture references: It is very important for a subtitler to be informed about the things that are happening at the moment. TV shows and films most of the time have pop culture references embedded or there appear characters discussing current events. The subtitler must learn to identify them in order to translate them appropriately, keep the message and transmit it to the audience. One of the most popular TV shows that is full of pop culture references is “Gilmore Girls”. The main characters often talk about movie plots, movie titles, historical characters and famous people. In this particular case, subtitlers have the task of spotting these references and translating them for the target audience because sometimes movie titles or characters’ names are different.
- Knowledge of the target culture: It is necessary for a subtitler to have knowledge about the target culture. As it was stated earlier, there are many differences from culture to culture. Each one is a different world and the subtitler needs to be aware of this so he can render a proper translation that the target audience will be able to grasp.

- Knowledge of cross-cultural references and constraints: It is very important for a subtitler to have knowledge about both the source and target cultures. Sometimes a concept or work can mean something in one language, but it is known as something completely different in another language. A subtitler needs to be aware of these differences and do research on them so he can render them suitably.

-Translation Techniques: One of the most important skills translators and subtitlers must possess is the proper use of translation techniques. As subtitlers have to work with limited space and have a maximum of characters per line, they resort to these techniques in order to preserve the original message and transfer it to the target audience. The following classification was retrieved from the information of the questionnaires answered by translators and subtitlers. They believe the most important techniques a subtitler should know how to use are: localization, transcreation and quality assurance.

- Localization: Possessing this skill will enable subtitlers to work on different adaptations. They will have the skill of adapting the language for a specific audience or region in the world.
- Transcreation: This is a very important skill that a subtitler must have in order to be successful in the subtitling industry. There are times when they need to use their creativity to come up with a whole new concept or word for which there is no match in the target language. This happens often with movie titles. Sometimes movie titles change completely from the source language to the target language.
- Quality Assurance: This skill will allow the translator to ensure the quality of the final product.
- Adaptation: This is a very important skill subtitlers need to achieve because this part of the process is about dividing and adjusting the text into subtitle units. Once they learn how a subtitle unit is composed, they will be able to cut the dialogue or adjusting it so it meets the acceptable criteria.

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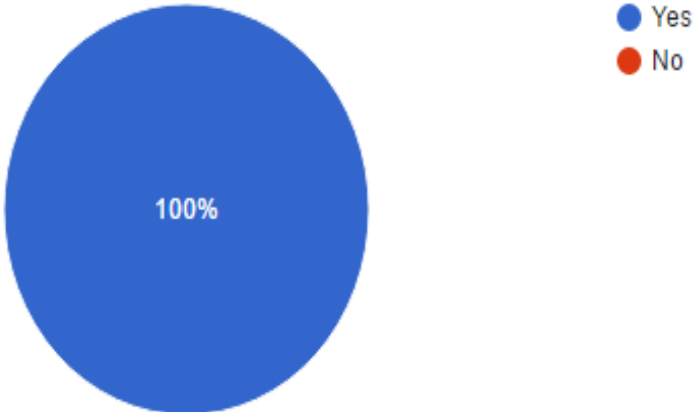
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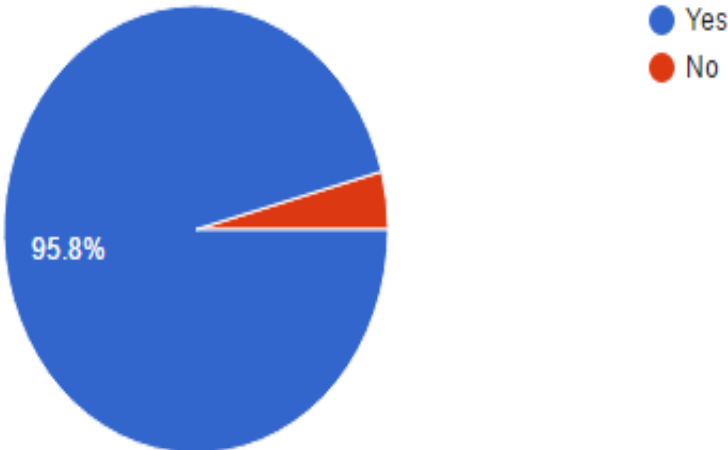
5. Appendix

Survey to the students of the School of English Language of Catholic University of Santiago de Guayaquil

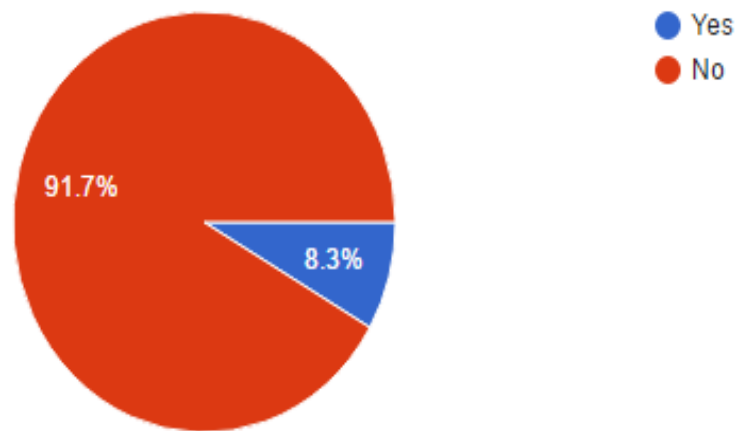
1. Do you think a translator should acquire special training to work in the subtitling industry?



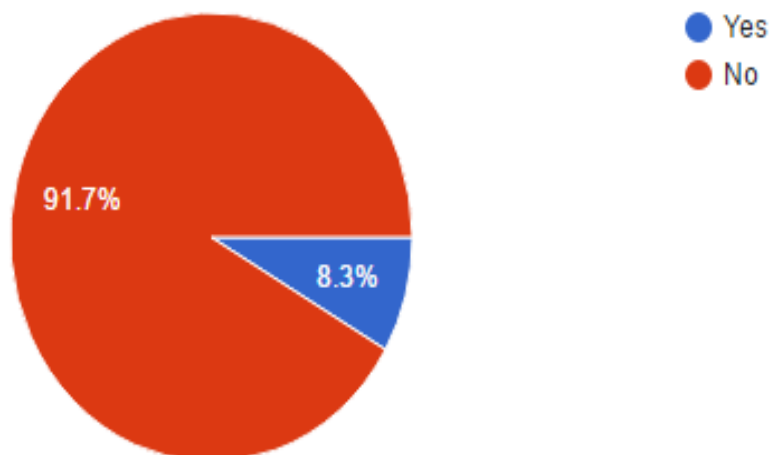
2. Do you think that subtitlers are required to have a different set of skills and competences than a translator?



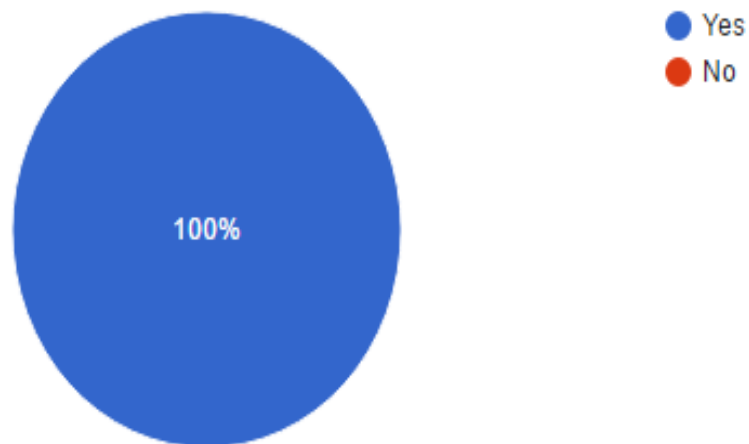
3. Do you think that basic translation training is enough to work in the subtitling industry?



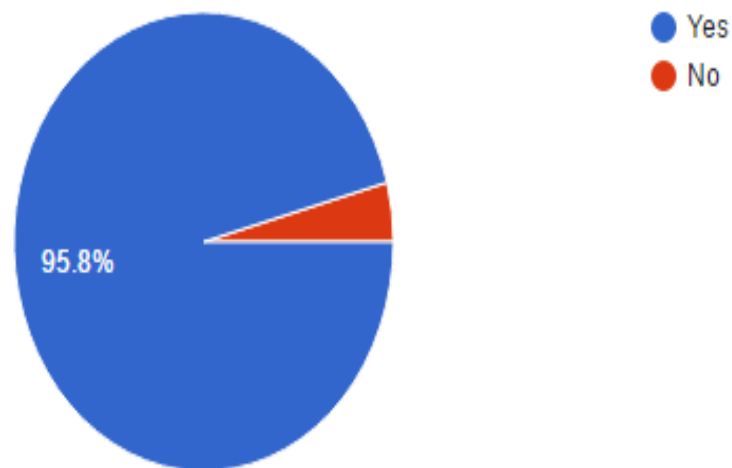
4. Do you think that a translator with basic translation knowledge will be successful in the subtitling industry?



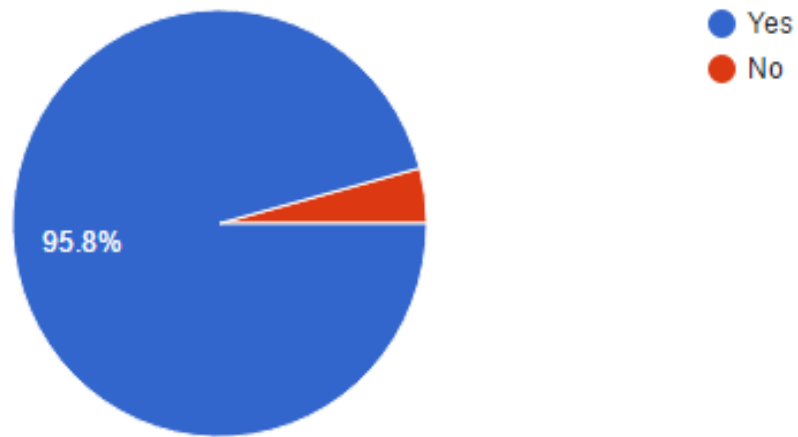
5. Do you think an academic specialized program for translators aiming to work in the subtitling field is necessary?



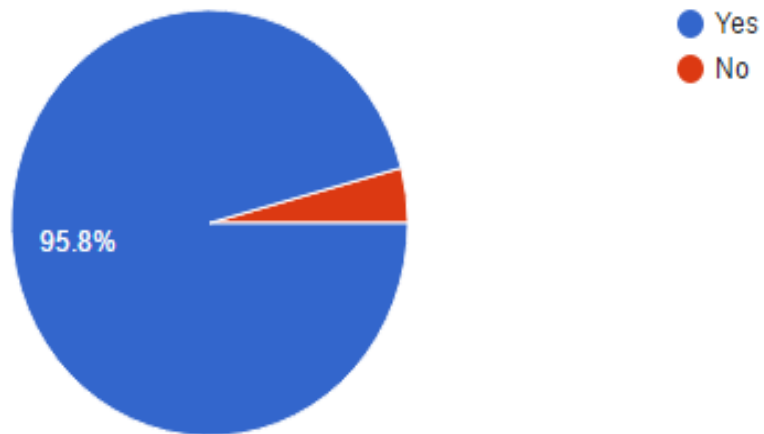
6. Do you think there is a need to have more translators specialized in the field of subtitling?



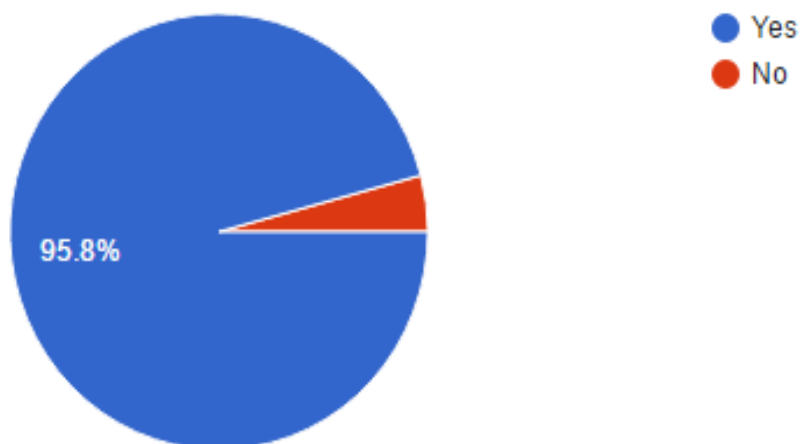
7. Do you think there is a need to have an academic training program for subtitling in Ecuador?



8. Do you think subtitling is a profitable field for translators?



9. Would you be interested in pursuing a subtitling program if it were offered by the School of English Language of the Catholic University of Santiago de Guayaquil?



Questionnaires

Questionnaire # 1 answered by: Alejandro Morales

He studied Telecommunications Engineering with a minor in Computer Science at Instituto Politecnico Nacional in Mexico. He also studies Japanese at the Urawa center (国際交流基金日本語国際センター). He translates from Spanish into Japanese and he is also a subtitler.

1. What are the main tasks of a translator?

Para un traductor freelance las tareas son buscar clientes, acordar trabajos, continuar informándose de la situación del mercado, participar en mesas de actualización, y obviamente ejecutar los trabajos procurando la mayor satisfacción del cliente.

Para un traductor de planta las tareas se reducen a las últimas tres enunciadas y algunas tareas extras dependiendo la interacción dentro de la empresa.

2. What are the main skills and competences required by a translator?

La primera e indispensable un dominio en el manejo de ambos idiomas por encima de C1, diplomacia, elocuencia e imparcialidad.

3. Do you think the set of skills and competences a translator possesses are sufficient to work in the subtitling industry? Why?

No. Porque además es necesario el dominio de ciertas herramientas tecnológicas de carácter especializado. Manejo de diferentes formatos, y la habilidad para resolver problemas (como el moyibake, así como la experiencia para evitarlo).

4. What do you think are the skills and competences a subtitler needs to have?

Habilidad para recodificar formatos, reformatear archivos o redecorar los colores y estilos de las letras, experiencia para ayudarse de programas que recortan líneas largas automáticamente y provean arreglos de sobre posicionamiento de tiempos, etc. Por lo que hay muchas competencias informáticas involucradas. Y hasta de timing.

5. Do you think subtitles have the same features all around the world?

Por supuesto que no.

6. Would you work in the subtitling industry without having obtained prior training in the field? Why?

Sí, contar con experiencia en el mercado informal, es lo equivalente a establecer un negocio, y aunque no es lo ideal si resulta funcional.

7. Do you think that an academic program for translators aiming to work in the subtitling field is necessary? Why?

Si, de hecho me gustaría formar parte como parte de un negocio, la constitución de un sistema académico que así lo incluya. Principalmente por la certidumbre que tendrían los clientes al estar obteniendo traducciones de calidad de traductores académicos, habilidades y competencias las cuales no podrían evaluar por ellos mismos.

8. Do you think it is important for translators to obtain special training to work as subtitlers? Why?

Si, para ampliar el mercado de oportunidades.

9. Do you think subtitling has become a more popular nowadays? Why?

Tal vez aún más que el subtitulado, el doblaje, pero es una mera apreciación ya que hay trabajo tanto para traductores como para intérpretes.

10. Do think there is a need to have more professionals trained in the subtitling field?

Sí.

Questionnaire # 2 answered by: Renzo Garcia

He is a freelance translator from Lima, Peru. He studied Translation and Interpretation at the Cibertec Institute in Peru.

1. What are the main tasks of a translator?

Translate in a faithful and clearly way the total message into the target language.

2. What are the main skills and competences required by a translator?

The main skills are fluently, this is basically necessary to express the same idea into different forms. The other skill would be to completely understand the sense of the source language. Competences would be to know entirely about the grammar and expressions in a language.

3. Do you think the set of skills and competences a translator possesses are sufficient to work in the subtitling industry? Why?

I think the skills and competences a translator has are not sufficient in the subtitling area because this last one involves more competences and more preparation in the area.

4. What do you think are the skills and competences a subtitler needs to have?

Of course one competence a subtitler must have is to know about location (how specific things are called in a specific area). Regarding competences, I think a subtitler needs to get involved into learning about some subtitling programs and the functions they have.

5. Do you think subtitles have the same features all around the world?

They could have it, I think that depends on how subtitles are handled by subtitlers.

6. Would you work in the subtitling industry without having obtained prior training in the field? Why?

I think I won't. I wouldn't feel my company proud because of my work. First, I'll need to completely get involved with this topic.

7. Do you think that an academic program for translators aiming to work in the subtitling field is necessary? Why?

Yes, I really think that translators need to be taught in this field because nowadays this field is being used into the film field so I think it is necessary this way translators will have the opportunity to get a job in this area.

8. Do you think it is important for translators to obtain special training to work as subtitlers? Why?

Yes, as I have mentioned before it is necessary to get involved in this field.

9. Do you think subtitling has become a more popular nowadays? Why?

Yes, subtitling has become very popular into many different fields as well as dubbing. I think this is due to the reason that subtitling can be spread around the world throughout the lecture in films, series, etc.

10. Do think there is a need to have more professionals trained in the subtitling field?

Yes, because subtitling is being most required these days.

Questionnaire #3 answered by: Ricki Farn

He is a translator from Germany. First, he studied Computing and then, separately from that, he studied English Language, Literature and Culture.

1. What are the main tasks of a translator?

Understanding the source text and rendering it in the target language so that it is comprehensible, follows the client's Style Guide and vocabulary, and if possible doesn't sound too terrible.

2. What are the main skills and competences required by a translator?

Knowledge of the source and target language, knowledge of the subject matter, ability to look up stuff on Google, patience and the ability to stay awake even over terribly boring texts.

3. Do you think the set of skills and competences a translator possesses are sufficient to work in the subtitling industry? Why?

I think the skills are sufficient, but it would just not pay to do subtitling, as subtitling requires constantly shortening the text and creating sentences that are split up but still read naturally. Either you have to learn to do this really fast or you will lose money. I think some translators can learn that, but it would take a bit of a learning curve, and it is probably also a question of personality.

4. What do you think are the skills and competences a subtitler needs to have?

Not the same as a translator, plus they should like movies (fiction or non-fiction) to have some feel for what kind of written material goes well with a movie, plus the ability to distinguish what information is important and what can be left out. They should also about the different kinds of software professionals use to subtitler and which one is best.

5. Do you think subtitles have the same features all around the world?

I have no idea. Maybe the languages that write characters like Chinese and Korean have some different aspects than languages with the Latin alphabet? We would have to ask the Chinese colleagues :-)

6. Would you work in the subtitling industry without having obtained prior training in the field? Why?

No. Well, because I would produce some terribly clumsy ill-fitting subtitles and still take far too long to make it profitable.

7. Do you think that an academic program for translators aiming to work in the subtitling field is necessary? Why?

I do think it is necessary, it would be nice to have one. I would certainly be interested if there was one available.

8. Do you think it is important for translators to obtain special training to work as subtitlers? Why?

It is important only if they want to be subtitlers. Maybe it could be one of those courses that you can choose to take, but not every student is forced to take?

9. Do you think subtitling has become a more popular nowadays? Why?

I have no idea. Does subtitling ever become more or less popular? In some countries such as Germany (with a large number of speakers), almost everything is dubbed / has a voice over. In other countries such as the Netherlands (with few speakers), many of the television programs just have subtitles, which is why the Dutch speak German and English so well. But is that ever going to change?

It's always nice to have subtitles on Youtube, but is that an actual commercial market? I don't know.

10. Do you think there is a need to have more professionals trained in the subtitling field?

I do because not everyone can produce good subtitles. Yes, you can be a translator and work in subtitling too, but need to acquire some sort of training in order to work in this field. You cannot just decide to work in it without having obtained previous training.

Questionnaire # 4 answered by: Georgi Kovachev

He is a freelance translator from Bulgaria. He studied at The Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, Bulgaria (Master's degree in English Philology – Translation and Business Communication, with honors); and at The University of National and World Economy, Sofia, Bulgaria (Master's degree in International Economic Relations).

1. What are the main tasks of a translator?

Translate, edit and proofread; other tasks, such as DTP, formatting, etc., should be considered supplementary services.

2. What are the main skills and competences required by a translator?

Very good knowledge of the source language and the target language and education in any other field (e.g. law, various types of engineering, IT, etc.)

3. Do you think the set of skills and competences a translator possesses are sufficient to work in the subtitling industry? Why?

No, because the challenges a translator and a subtitler have to face are not interchangeable. I personally think that in order to work as a subtitler, you need to acquire a different set of skills and competences.

4. What do you think are the skills and competences a subtitler needs to have?

I do not really know much about it, but I think they need to be proficient in the source and target language and have knowledge about the different and best software available to produce subtitles.

5. Do you think subtitles have the same features all around the world?

I am not sure about it, but I think that subtitlers adhere to a specific type of font or letter size. As I am not an expert about it, I think that the number of characters that appear on screen are different in some countries due to their alphabet.

6. Would you work in the subtitling industry without having obtained prior training in the field? Why?

Definitely, but only if I have the time to study this field. Otherwise, I do not think I would be good at it.

7. Do you think that an academic program for translators aiming to work in the subtitling field is necessary? Why?

Yes, it would provide theoretical, and technical, knowledge regarding a particular field of translation.

8. Do you think it is important for translators to obtain special training to work as subtitlers? Why?

If there is a training course, why not. Any knowledge has always been necessary and it provides a competitive advantage over fellow translators.

9. Do you think subtitling has become a more popular nowadays? Why?

I do think it has become more popular because nowadays more countries have access to movies and TV series. People sometimes get anxious about watching new movies and they would not mind having the content subtitled instead than having it dubbed.

10. Do you think there is a need to have more professionals trained in the subtitling field?

I do because thousands of movies, TV series, documentaries and videogames are made every year, so there needs to be more professional subtitlers because a translator cannot produce good subtitles.

Questionnaire # 5 answered by: Max Deryagin

He is an audiovisual translator and subtitler from Russia. He specializes in Cinema, TV, drama and advertising. He is a certified member of the European Association for Studies in Screen Translation and of the SUBTLE – Subtitler’s Association.

1. Do you think a translator has the necessary training to work in the subtitling field?

Absolutely not. It's up to the person to decide whether to take a course or study on their own, but training is essential in this translation field.

2. Do you think it is necessary for a translator to acquire special training to work in the subtitling field? Why?

Yes. Because it is a separate field of translation with its own specifics and limitations.

3. What skills and competences are necessary for a translator who wishes to work in the subtitling field?

Theoretical knowledge in general translation studies and specialized AV studies; proficiency in subtitling software; good knowledge of subtitle format specs; proficiency in at least two languages.

4. Do you think that an academic program for translators aiming to work in this field is necessary?

I do think it’s necessary because it’s a different field of translation and subtitlers don’t have to face the same challenges as translators and they need the necessary training in order to do that.

5. Do you think strong multimedia knowledge is necessary to work as a subtitler?

I don’t think it’s the most important thing when working as a subtitler, but it definitely helps and is advisable to know a little bit about movies, TV series or documentaries.

6. What are the different steps of the subtitling process?

Timecoding, translation, simulation, burning-in (optionally).

7. What are the different features regarding the nature of subtitles?

There isn't much of a difference among the European/Slavic languages (including Russian), but when it comes to language groups, the differences become more pronounced. The hieroglyphic languages, for example, use ruby characters.

8. Are there standard features subtitlers must adhere to?

The features definitely vary from country to country, and they even vary from company to company. I don't think there are (or should be) some set-in-stone requirements working across the board.

9. Which subtitling software have you worked with?

EZTitles, Titlvision SubMachine, WinCaps Qu4ntum, FAB Subtitler, Softel Swift, Spot Subtitling System, Subtitle Edit, Subtitle Workshop, Aegisub.

10. Which one would you recommend for translators who are seeking special training in this field?

EZTitles is very convenient and extremely powerful, offering near-endless customizability and modern-looking user interface. It also has some unique features such as typing subtitle text right on the video screen instead of the subtitle box, but what's most amazing is the extent to which EZTitles is automated -- it just does a lot of work for you.

Questionnaire #6 answered by: Angelica Ramirez

Ella reside en Mexico. Trabaja en subtítulaje y traducción para doblaje. Estudió un doctorado en traducción y tiene 15 años de experiencia traduciendo series y películas.

1. Do you think a translator has the necessary training to work in the subtitling field?

I don't think so. Subtitling requires a very specific training that a general translator does not have.

2. Do you think it is necessary for a translator to acquire special training to work in the subtitling field? Why?

Yes, I do. Training is the only way to learn the rules of subtitling, such as the need of synthesizing the content of dialogues and conveying it in a limited amount of characters per line. It also helps you develop specific skills. For example, you must identify rhetorical figures, figurative speech, and any non-literal expressions, then interpret their meanings, and translating them in the most adequate way.

3. What skills and competences are necessary for a translator who wishes to work in the subtitling field?

From my point of view, a good translator specializing in subtitling should be proficient in the source language, have a good knowledge of the source culture, be able to identify the relevant parts of dialogues and translate them in the most precise and clear way. He/she should be creative when needed, and have a very good command of his/her native tongue in terms of grammar, spelling and vocabulary.

4. Do you think that an academic program for translators aiming to work in this field is necessary?

Yes, I do. A translation program focusing on audiovisual translation is fundamental to develop the skills mentioned above, which are necessary for quality subtitling.

5. Do you think having strong multimedia knowledge is necessary to work as a subtitler?

It would be useful. A subtitler should know certain concepts of cinematographic language, such as “voice off”, “close up”, “frame”, “shot”, and so on.

6. What are the different steps of the subtitling process?

The translator downloads the video from Internet (via Dropbox, Wettransfer, etc.). Most of the times you get the script, but sometimes there are no scripts available. You watch the video first and try to find its function (entertaining, instructional, educational, marketing, etc.). If you are a good subtitler, you must reproduce the function of the original video taking into account the content and the target audience. Then you start translating by using a special subtitling software which allows you to time the subtitles. When you finish translating, you (should) watch the video, check your subtitles and correct any timing or spelling mistakes. Then you send the resulting subtitle file via Internet.

7. What are the different features regarding the nature of subtitles?

TV subtitles can have two lines, each line must have a maximum length of 34 characters, including spaces and punctuation marks. For the cinema, subtitles can have up to 37-40 characters per line. Internet videos can include more characters per line, but they should also have maximum 2 lines. More than 2 lines cannot be read in less than 4 seconds, and it's very unusual that subtitles can stay on the screen for 4 seconds. There must be a synchronization between subtitles and dialogues, which means the subtitle must not appear before the dialogue starts and cannot stay after the dialogue finishes.

8. Are there standard features subtitlers must adhere to?

As far as I know, professional subtitlers must adhere to the norms above explained. The standards are set by audiovisual media, so they should be the same anywhere. Most of the people who upload subtitles for YouTube videos are not professional, that is why those subtitles do not follow any rule.

9. Which subtitling software have you worked with?

I have worked with Subbits, Subtitle Workshop, and Aegisub.

10. Which one would you recommend for translators who are seeking special training in this field?

Aegisub is a free subtitling program you can download from the Internet. It is very useful since it allows you to do the timing process based on the audio, not only on the video.

Online questionnaires answered by people who make fan subs

Questionnaire #1

- 1. Do you think a translator has the necessary training to work in the subtitling field?**

Not entirely

- 2. Do you think it is necessary for a translator to acquire special training to work in the subtitling field? Why?**

Yes, they should know cultural aspects of the nation in which the show is produced

- 3. What skills and competences are necessary for a translator who wishes to work in the subtitling field?**

They have to keep up with current events and the cultural trends; they also have to know how television production works

- 4. Do you think that an academic program for translators aiming to work in this field is necessary?**

Very. It's important to be trained for it and take specialized courses.

- 5. Do you think having knowledge about movies, TV series or documentaries is necessary to work as a subtitler?**

Yes, it is!

- 6. What are the different steps of the subtitling process?**

First, enjoy the show. Second, write down the dialogue. Third, translate what you got. Fourth, fill the blanks by listening again and using the co-text.

- 7. What are the different features of subtitles?**

Respondent skipped this question

- 8. Are there any standard features regarding the nature of subtitles?**

There are some standard features but they aren't written in stone.

9. Which subtitling softwares have you worked with?

Subtitle workshop

10. Which ones would you recommend for translators who are seeking special training in this field? Why?

Subtitle workshop, because it's easy to use

Questionnaire #2

1. **Do you think a translator has the necessary training to work in the subtitling field?**

No.

2. **Do you think it is necessary for a translator to acquire special training to work in the subtitling field? Why?**

Yes, as far as I know, a translator and a subtitler perform different tasks.

3. **What skills and competences are necessary for a translator who wishes to work in the subtitling field?**

They must learn to make short sentences and have some imagination.

4. **Do you think that an academic program for translators aiming to work in this field is necessary?**

That'd be cool.

5. **Do you think having knowledge about movies, TV series or documentaries is necessary to work as a subtitler?**

I don't think a translator needs more knowledge than the basis culture everyone who watches movies has. Of course in the case of TV show they must have seen the previous seasons/episode. Read the comics/book the content is adapted from one is a plus but not a requirement i think.

6. **What are the different steps of the subtitling process?**

Grabbing the subtitles from the official stream/website, sync and correct it, upload it on Addic7ed \o/

7. **What are the different features regarding the nature of subtitles?**

They are useful for foreigners and people who can't hear correctly. They are also useful for machine-learning and dictionaries. Reverso.com get some of its answer from subtitles and I suspect Google is feeding translate.google.com with subtitles.

8. Are there any standard features subtitlers must adhere to?

There are standards but i don't have a link to show you. There are even more standards when it comes to hearing-impaired subtitles. I know there are also certification for the french fansub scene but these aren't official.

9. Which subtitling softwares have you worked with?

On linux Subtitles Edit, on Windows Virtual Subtitles Sync (VSS).

10. Which ones would you recommend for translators who are seeking special training in this field? Why?

VSS. As far as I know it is the most used software in subtitling. It is even a requirement in the french fansub scene.

Questionnaire #3

1. **Do you think a translator has the necessary training to work in the subtitling field?**

No

2. **Do you think it is necessary for a translator to acquire special training to work in the subtitling field? Why?**

Yes, because translators sometimes work on much more complex documents, but subtitlers focus on timing and character length.

3. **What skills and competences are necessary for a translator who wishes to work in the subtitling field?**

Good language skills and for documentaries a basic knowledge of the topic

4. **Do you think that an academic program for translators aiming to work in this field is necessary?**

Yes

5. **Do you think having knowledge about movies, TV series or documentaries is necessary to work as a subtitler?**

No, language skills are more important

6. **What are the different steps of the subtitling process?**

Getting the raw text that is being spoken, setting the timings for each line correctly, (translating it)

7. **What are the different features regarding the nature of subtitles?**

Respondent skipped this question

8. **Are there any standard features subtitlers must adhere to?**

That depends on the region. Asian subtitles for English movies have are for example not always that exact translation, because the meaning weighs out the direct translation.

9. Which subtitling softwares have you worked with?

Aegisub

10. Which ones would you recommend for translators who are seeking special training in this field? Why?

Aegisub, because I think it's easy to use.

Questionnaire #4

1. Do you think a translator has the necessary training to work in the subtitling field?

Not unless they were on a special bridging course.

2. Do you think it is necessary for a translator to acquire special training to work in the subtitling field? Why?

Yes. 1) They'll have to learn how to sync subtitles properly. 2) Subtitles have got to be short and sharp, not much to do with literary translation.

3. What skills and competences are necessary for a translator who wishes to work in the subtitling field?

Concision, a good sense of humour in own language to correctly adapt puns.

4. Do you think that an academic program for translators aiming to work in this field is necessary?

Yes. It is necessary

5. Do you think having knowledge about movies, TV series or documentaries is necessary to work as a subtitler?

Yes, or you'll miss a lot of references and won't adapt them correctly.

6. What are the different steps of the subtitling process?

1) Grab video and CCs or original subtitles 2) Watch video to check for syncing errors in original subs 3) Translate 4) Proofread 5) Have a nap and proofread again when brain stops pounding, just to be sure.

7. What are the different features of subtitles?

Not sure what you mean by that. Choices like hearing impaired or not, colour, size, font, background color, onscreen position?

8. Are there any standard features subtitlers must follow or are they different in every country?

Different in every country, and usually from a TV network to another.

9. Which subtitling softwares have you worked with?

Subtitle Edit, VSS.

10. Which ones would you recommend for translators who are seeking special training in this field? Why?

Subtitle Edit: free, easy to work with, no glitches, automatic fix of common errors and removal of HI indications, plus the dev is a nice guy. :)

Questionnaire #5

1. **Do you think a translator has the necessary training to work in the subtitling field?**

No.

2. **Do you think it is necessary for a translator to acquire special training to work in the subtitling field? Why?**

Yes. It's not only a matter of translation, more a matter of adaptation.

3. **What skills and competences are necessary for a translator who wishes to work in the subtitling field? (based on experience)**

Language skills, spelling, reformulation

4. **Do you think that an academic program for translators aiming to work in this field is necessary?**

Yes

5. **Do you think having knowledge about movies, TV series or documentaries is necessary to work as a subtitler?**

It helps ^^

6. **What are the different steps of the subtitling process?**

Transcript (or getting the script), timecoding, sync, translation, proofreading

7. **What are the different features of subtitles?**

1/ normalized 2/ Hi version 3/ non-HI version

8. **Are there any standard features subtitlers must follow or are they different in every country?**

Different according to the country but they tend to be normalized

9. **Which subtitling softwares have you worked with?**

VSS, Subtitle Edit, Aegisub

10. Which ones would you recommend for translators who are seeking special training in this field? Why?

Online translation on addic7ed. A good way to begin, especially with an add-on called A7++



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DECLARACIÓN Y AUTORIZACIÓN

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TÍTULO Y SUBTÍTULO:	Descriptive Study of Translator's Skills and Competences Applicable to Subtitling Processes for Specific Training Purposes at the School of English Language of the Catholic University of Santiago de Guayaquil		
AUTOR(ES)	Andrea Mercedes, Vizuite Hidalgo		
REVISOR(ES)/TUTOR(ES)	Sara Inés Rivadeneira Enríquez		
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PALABRAS CLAVES/ KEYWORDS:	Map of Skills and Competences, Subtitling, Features of Subtitles, Audiovisual Translation, Adaptation, Transcreation, Quality Assurance.		
RESUMEN/ABSTRACT:	<p>This paper pursues to map the skills and competences required by a translator aiming to work in the subtitling industry. These subtitling studies are meant to be at the disposal of the students who have completed their university studies at the School of English Language of the Catholic University of Santiago de Guayaquil and desire to boost their practical skills in multimedia translation. This descriptive study contains a description of all the skills and competences required by subtitlers who wish to work competently in this field. This map of skills and competences will help translators tackle the common problems that arise during the subtitling process and it will also help them become familiar with the field</p>		

so they can perform successfully. The gathering and proposal of the necessary skills and competences was done through questionnaires answered by professional translators and subtitlers. The School of English Language is expected to design an academic curriculum based on this map of skills and competences and offer specialization studies for translation students who wish to become subtitlers. This program will provide them will all the necessary knowledge and training to work in the subtitling field.

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CONTACTO CON AUTOR/ES:	Teléfono: +593-982836428	E-mail: andreavizuite@hotmail.es
CONTACTO CON LA INSTITUCIÓN (COORDINADOR DEL PROCESO UTE)::	Nombre: Jarrín Hunter, Ximena Marita	
	Teléfono: +593-4-6043752 / 0999613680	
	E-mail: xjarrin@yahoo.com , ximena.jarrin@cu.ucsg.edu.ec	
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