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# Audiovisual Localisation in the Age of Streaming Platforms

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## INTRODUCTION

IRENE: Good afternoon. My name is Irene de Higes. I work at Universitat Jaume I. It is a pleasure for me to host the third open seminar organised by the Collaborative Network of Early-Career Researchers in Audiovisual Translation and Media Accessibility, ColNet.

Today we will have Alejandro Bolaños García Escribano from the University College London to talk about Audiovisual Localisation in the age of streaming platforms.

This seminar is also organised by ColNet, but with the support of the COST Action LEAD-ME 19142, which supports us with the accessibility of the seminars and the availability of this seminar later on their website.

It is a pleasure for me to host Alejandro Bolaños. It will be great to have you here at the University of Jaume I. Well, I'm not at the University of Jaume I, anyway. But well, it will be a pleasure to have you here, but, at the same time, it might be difficult to have so many different countries in the seminar in the same room. So, thank you all for attending even if it's 5th July.

Alejandro is a lecturer (teaching) in Audiovisual Translation at the University College London, where he teaches audiovisual translation and Spanish language and culture at both the Centre for Translation Studies and the Department of Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies.

His latest research revolves around the pedagogical potential of cloud subtitling and explores the latest innovations in audiovisual translation education. He also works as a freelance translator and subtitler.

Alejandro, the floor is yours, and thank you very much for accepting to be our third speaker.

## PRESENTATION

ALEJANDRO: Thank you, Irene, and thanks to the rest of my colleagues from ColNet and the COST Action for having me. Thank you, everyone, for making this presentation on 5th July of all day, which is supposed to be a public holiday on the other end of the Atlantic.

I would just like to start my talk by asking this simple question. Why this talk? Why today after such a challenging academic year?

Well, I would like to build on some of the research papers that have been published recently, and some of which were saying audiovisual translation has grown by leaps and bounds as we know. And mainly, sorry, basically every single AVT publication will start saying how much of a growth we were witnessing.

The fact is that this keeps being so right, and there's another paper that I would like to look at, which is by Nikolic and Bywood, published just a few months back, and in which they were saying that our habits are changing and that we are consuming more audiovisual products in different media, especially in streaming platforms. So, I just wanted to take stock of all of this, see where we are in audiovisual translation, and perhaps have a conversation about what it is that we need to know in the industry today.

In this paper, they also concluded by saying that there were six areas where people that were surveyed back in 2016 and 2018 agreed on. Four of these areas, I think, have gained wider currency nowadays and are highly important in today's landscape, not only at university but also in the profession. That would be the fostering of better cooperation between academics and industry, the transferability of certain skills that we develop at university, and then, we employ when we become professionals, the standardisation and harmonisation that are required for the industry to make further advancements, and also the technology. In this case, they mentioned subtitles, but we know that technology is having a much wider impact on other practices.

So, I'd just like to start just, really, really briefly... What is it that we know or that we should know about audiovisual translation?

We know that it's different from other translation specialisms because we've got different channels and codes in which meaning is achieved. So, the ways in which information, pieces of information are conveyed, and then the ways in which we localise the information very accordingly.

So, if there are some characteristics that we could draft, those would be the existence of channels and signs that we have to take into consideration when we translate, the necessity of using some kind of special software to override the technical limitations, the fact that the subtitler or the translator is part of the broader project and it's not working in isolation, it's just one part of the chain, the fact that we are targeting a specific audience, which is kind of relevant for certain practices, especially in media accessibility, and the fact that we've got national conventions that we have to abide by. These are, I think, I presume, things that most of you are already quite familiar with.

We know that there are mainly two main umbrella modes: revoicing and subtitling, and that then there are media accessibility practices that we take from the different practices that exist.

And, of course, we know that depending on how we want to convey information, we will be using different sub practices within the audiovisual translation. Okay.

But we also know that's not as easy as it sounds. We also know that come new practices, come new technologies. We've got yet newer practices that we have to deal with, and we, translators, encounter many more challenges, such as dynamic products and interactive products. We've got these multimedia programmes in which the audience were given further flexibility. You get to decide how the product looks like as such as *Wei or Die*, which you see at the top of the screen, or *Bandersnatch* at the top of the screen. And that, of course, has many implications in the ways in which

we translate and localise these programmes. So, it's not as straightforward as it looks.

But, if you had to kind of sum up and see what is that we know about audiovisual translation, there is a wide agreement that the object of study is not solely comprised of texts but audiovisual texts, meaning there's a multisemiotic construct, something that goes beyond words. It defers because we've got this multimodal and multimedia construct, this concept. We've got norms which are often long-standing conventions that are widely used across the industry, and more importantly, we agree that we can never translate a clip without having access to the clip and watching it first. I'm sure that rings any bells to many of you, and we translate and localise the whole clip in its entirety, not only the dialogues.

Research also allows us to challenge some of these long-standing ideas. So, the first star that you see there, Díaz-Cintas and Szarkowska, in their paper, said, "these norms that we have basically embraced for many decades, some of them don't have the scientific evidence needed to continue applying them". So, we do need more research, experimental research, to challenge or confirm some of those assumptions.

There are some other researchers who have found out that there are sometimes, translators are working in the shadows. They don't have access to the clip, they are just translating blindly or sometimes you just don't watch the clip in for, you just go one by one because, subtitle by subtitle, because you're given a template and you've got a such a short space of time that there's no way you can practically watch the whole clip before you crack on working.

So, those are also some of the things that some other researchers have been investigating. So, for instance, templates.

So, what has the academic community know about audiovisual translation in recent years? Well, much research has been devoted to technical constraints: how limited space with clips affects how we work, how we

translate, and how synchronisation poses problems to translators, to subtitlers, for instance.

And then, there's been lots of descriptive research on culture, culture references and adaptation of clips, linguistic variations, so how do accents play the role in the localisation of programmes, humour, wordplays, or being linguistic or extra linguistic, register, etcetera, etcetera. These are the so-called research red hot topics that academia has been kind of highlighting for many years.

So, what is new? Why this paper today? What is new that we should take into consideration? Well, there are many new challenges that we have to factor in. We've got new tools, new technologies, cloud ecosystems that are currently much more widely used, not only by companies but also by end clients and by freelancers. And there are also, there's also a higher number of translation project management tools, some of which are also connected with those cloud tools so that translators or subtitlers work within the same interface, and we've got what they call this kind of end-to-end translation process. So, we don't leave the same interface.

We've got new practices. We've got respeaking, which is to be done interlingually. There's now a lot of work being done in interlingual respeaking. And there's a tendency to embrace machine translation and post-editing. We will be talking about that; how Neural Machine Translation has made it into the mainstream of audiovisual translation and how post-editing will be taking a much more important role in the industry. Alongside automatic speech recognition with ever more present tools that would recognise audio and that would make the work of subtitlers, for instance, much more seamless. And last but not least, the implications that all of these technologies will have, so the impacts that these will have on quality and also the ways in which we carry out quality control practices, which is, as we will see, being increasingly automated.

And this of course response to what is becoming this kind of technological turn, this new buzzword in translation studies, this methodological turn

where, as a discipline, we are embracing technologies much much more, not only in the profession but also in research, in how we carry out our studies of how the market works.

So, in the industry, there's of course being a rapid transformation of media consumption, which has gone hand by hand with the evolution of cloud and streaming technologies. If we take a look at just the last eleven years, we see how the market has grown by leaps and bounds basically. So, in just a much of years, in over a decade, we have moved from the most revolutionary Blu-ray discs at the end of the early notice to a plethora of streaming platforms that are cohabiting today in the market. And of course, these platforms are having an impact on consumption, on us as consumers of all of those products.

If we take a look at this survey, we see... If we take a look at the yellow colour, there on the bars, the yellow colour represents streaming video-on-demand platforms. So, there's been an increasingly sharp growth in how we consume video on-demand products as opposed to traditional television.

So, we're basically consuming more information, more programmes on-demand, than on traditional television. And there's of course the issue of stacking.

I don't know about you, but I guess I'm not the only one here in the room who has more than one streaming platform. Chances are some of you will have three, four because they give you free trials or because somebody in your house just has access to different streaming platforms.

And then, at the end of the day, we've got three or four streaming platforms that we have access to. This of course is increasing the number of programmes that are being made available to us on a regular basis.

This, of course, is changing our own conception of television consumption. So, research on viewing habits has established that newer generations have even less of a commitment to the actual television set than the

Millennials do. So, we've got Generation Z, etcetera, who are coming, who are becoming clients and consumers, and they no longer want to watch television. They want to watch whatever they want, whenever they want.

So, I forgot to say I would be launching some questions today, some polls. And the first one comes here. Just out of curiosity. This is an anonymous poll. Can I just ask you how you would define yourself? So, if, Irene, you are kind enough to launch the first poll, you will see the first question: How would you define yourself?

IRENE: It should be already done.

ALEJANDRO: Thank you, Irene.

So, you can either decide whether you're a TV binge watcher or whether you're an old-fashioned TV viewer, or whether you're a hybrid viewer. So, you binge watch some weekends but then you're becoming a bit old-fashioned in follow normal TV series.

OK, I can see six, seven votes.

IRENE: Eight by now.

ALEJANDRO: I can see that there are five binge watchers and six hybrid viewers, which is more or less what I expected from today.

So, I think would consider myself under the third category. Sometimes, I just binge watch because I really enjoy the series but then I also like this traditional old-fashioned approach of just watching it whenever it's available.

But this kind of confirms this new trend, that there's a different commitment to viewing consumption. And this was also pointed out by some researchers who were speaking of this 'Netflix effect'. So, this 'Netflix effect' means that this growing progressive impact of technology is basically changing the ways in which we watch television. So, it has contributed to all of these changes and these exhibition modals. We're now consuming television on-demand and we've also got a curated catalogue

and there are people that work on curating those catalogues so that we've got access to what we supposedly want to watch.

I would now like to follow up on a conversation that Esther Bond and Florian Faes had. They are from Slator, and they had this conversation with ex Netflix executive Chris Fetner who is now working over in New Zealand with VoiceQ, which are developing some new dubbing technologies. He said this sentence. He said, "We didn't create..." Sorry, that's a typo. "We didn't create tension, but we created attention." And they most definitely did because they created this 'Netflix effect'. They changed how much television we consume, how we consume it and many people don't own a TV license anymore because they just watch on streaming, they just watch on-demand.

This, of course, was responding to some old-fashioned ideas of episodes being released on a regular basis and not just all of them at the same time. One of the first experiments discussed in the Language & the Media Conference a while ago now was this *Chelsea* programme.

So, they said, "Okay, we've got all of this community of fansubbers who are producing subtitles. They just produce the subtitles and we can't really keep a pace, we can't keep abreast of their subtitles because we don't have those workflows. So, what if we create a new workflow where we ask all of our subtitlers of all different languages to work at the same time and then we release the programme at the same time?"

This is what they did with *Chelsea* and many other programmes followed. I think it was quite successful in the sense that they managed to get hold of expectations. They basically managed to override this issue that they were having with fansubbing communities producing translations earlier and distributing things earlier than national distributors.

And then came preferred partners, and then Netflix said, "We need a platform just to see how good our subtitles are because we're just outsourcing all of these materials. We don't have these resources in-house

to provide the localisation of all our programmes, and we need to rely on international vendors. But how do we guarantee that the subtitlers that are working for Netflix are the very best?" They said, "Okay, we are going to create a testing platform which will consist of different exams, different tests. Then we assign a specific number, and this person just goes to a preferred partner, gets a contract and gets work to do."

So much for that many of you will know that it was a complete disaster because it was echoed by mainstream media. Then just the platform received an overwhelming number of applicants, and many of whom weren't specialists, didn't have the right training. So, it was a bit over chaos back then. They moved back to having preferred partners evaluating new subtitlers.

Building on what we said about binge-watching, I was reading the paper, I think that was two weeks ago, and I came across this article. The title is "We've reached peak binge: now viewers prefer an old-fashioned weekly hit".

Basically, this person —I, of course, carried out a bit of research on this person. Liam Kelly is, I guess, a Millennial. So just a little bit older than me, I think. He was saying we had enough. We've been binge watching television during the whole pandemic. We've had enough. We no longer want this 'Netflix effect'. We want the *Line of Duty* effect, which in the UK was quite a turn a few weeks ago because it came to an end, and everyone was expectant just to see how the series ended.

I don't know if I would very much agree with Liam Kelly on this. I think we have had enough of the pandemic, but I don't think we as a market, as a society of audiovisual consumers, have had enough of binge watching. I don't think that will end in the short run.

There's another quote that I took from this interview with Chris Fetner. He said, "The only way we can grow is by being in their language." And that I very much agree with because there's no way Netflix or any other

streaming platforms can grow for that matter if they don't localise their programmes, if they don't reach an international audience. So, that's why Netflix, for instance, established their first European production hub back in 2018, and it was in Madrid.

They said, "OK, we need a headquarter for all of our European productions." And well, it just happened to be in Madrid.

One has to ask oneself why that is so. Well, of course, it's not because they just want to spare no expense their spendings. It's just because the European Union approved a content quota for streaming services. So, 30% of the content that is being streamed by all of these OTT and VOD providers has to be European. 'European', also understood as the UK produced, which was also another dilemma, so as to speak, because the UK is no longer part of the European Union. But in terms of quotas, in terms of content, it still qualifies as European, as you know, regionally European.

So, there's plenty of content on Netflix that is still in English, produced in Great Britain.

What we also know is that Netflix has taken the lead in European scripted content. So, if you take a look at the 2019 figures, we saw that Netflix was one of the top five commissioners of new European scripted TV shows. Well, look at that growth. Look how it increased. It just jumped from 43 to 72 in just one year. Of course, I expect this growth to be even greater with all these new productions that they're funding.

There was another quote that I found particularly interesting. He said, and I think we can very much agree with this, translation is a commodity. So, if we conceive translation as a commodity, something that we necessarily have to pay to reach a global audience, then companies will try to cut corners, will have the financial impositions of cutting down on spendings.

So, he said, from the point of view of Netflix, so referring to common strategies adopted by a preferred vendor, they said, "We'll reduce the quality and costs until it becomes painful, and we get some signal that

we've gone too far, and we correct." We know this has happened with some companies, which basically went for machine translation with no post-editing or quality control. It was, of course, a major failure.

So, here comes the question of risk versus cost optimisation. How do I make money without high risk, without compromising quality and having audiences coming back to me and saying we don't like your programmes, there's no way we can watch them?

But, coming back to video-on-demand platforms, if we come back to Netflix and we go back a few years, we see that, initially, there were only localising programmes into English, Spanish and Portuguese, depending on the source language. They soon grew to localise into more than 20 languages.

Lobato, back then, said that most of the subtitles were supplied by right holders. Well, I don't very much agree with that. It very much depends on each distribution company. But for originals, and that I very much agree with, the companies have to produce their own subtitles.

So, what does that mean? That means lots of work. That's why, if we take a look at the media localisation data from the market, from the media localisation market, we see that it's an industry where there's plenty of money.

We see that for OTT platforms, but also pay-TV would count towards this VOD quota, we've got a very high percentage of programmes that need to be localised.

The European Middle East and Africa Association Market made a forecast of an increase of 5 to 8% in the amount of income that this media localisation industry would produce in just a matter of years; so, in three years, from 2018 to 2021.

Of course, we've got pandemic permitting, and we've got a whole pandemic. Many people were a bit concerned, especially freelancers who were evidently very afraid they would get fewer commissions and translation rates would be frozen if not reduced. But Nimdzi, in their latest

report, they said that all of these worries were greatly exaggerated and that the growth of the industry, of the language industry in general, is still there, and there's a big growth and we've got a big share of the market in media localisation.

Back in 2017, with all of these video-on-demand platforms coming up, we saw a greater demand for translators. 2017 also coincided with the time when Netflix started revoicing and doing English dubbing, English mainstream dubbing. So that's a timewise. It's coincidental. The problem is that, as Eden Estopace said, there was also a talent crunch.

So, we've got plenty of European countries, for instance, where there's plenty of translators training programmes. But then, we have many countries where there aren't enough translation training programmes, and there's no way we can fill in the needs of the market. There aren't enough trained audiovisual translators out there. Or, to put it in a different way, there are enough of certain language combinations but not enough translators in less popular language directionalities.

If we take a look at a normal workflow, the role of a subtitler, for instance, is limited to just these two steps. This is a bit of how the workflow would look like when we localise a programme. So, the subtitler would just jump in on those two steps. Well, subtitling the media and returning the files by email or a translation project management platform, or carrying out the quality control of the subtitles.

What about the rest? For the rest, we've got plenty of work that has to do with linguistics and project management, but which doesn't necessarily involve a language component.

Back in 2019, when analysing Netflix, Lobato said that the translation was still done by humans. Though the company was very keen to standardise this work. What do they mean by standardise? If we then move to 2020, there was an article that was published by several researchers, one of

whom happens to be from Netflix. The title of their paper was "Simplify-then-translate: Automatic Preprocessing for Black-Box Translation".

This looks a bit obscure, but if we look into the paper, what they're looking at doing is this standardisation, namely machine translation, and automating the whole process and bringing forward more technologies that would allow for a most seamless workflow.

We've also got other news. We've got these new lip-sync technologies that say they could change dubbing because they reanimate the entire faces of target actors. That would mean that dialogue writing would have less importance if we apply those technologies.

There was also another article in 2021. That's another typo. Excuse me. This paper reads, "Detecting over/under-translation errors for determining adequacy in human translations", and they come from Amazon. So, what is that they're doing?

Whereas in Netflix, they were looking at incorporating technologies to produce the translations; in Amazon, they're looking at incorporating technologies to make quality control semi-automatic. So, they're basically devising ways in which they can assess our work, human work, through an algorithm, and establish which subtitles have a good quality or not.

There are some subtitling platforms, some of them which are being made available to the public, which are incorporating machine translation systems. Some of them are looking at AppTek, and some others are looking at Amazon. If you want to know more about these engines, you can take a look at the article by Damian Santilli, published in April on LinkedIn. It should be a fairly easy search on Google. But, if you ask me, as a subtitler myself, for me, recently, the post-editing of machine-generated subtitles looks a bit like this. [Video presentation] Well, I think you get the gist.

There are other subtitlers that are saying on social media that some subtitlers are just charging too little because many companies are imposing

these extremely low subtitling rates. They're saying, "We're not fast-food restaurants; we make steak."

So, if you're a good subtitler and you produce good quality subtitles, then you should be charging more. You should have a very decent rate.

Coming back to these machine-generated subtitles, we, of course, have to take into consideration translation quality. In my experience, when I've been teaching machine translation for subtitles and post-editing, what I encountered is that my students would spend twice as much post-editing those subtitles.

I'm not saying that these systems can't get better over time. I'm not saying that. I'm saying assistance still looks a bit awry.

The good is we've got these multidimensional quality metrics. Because that's how our work as translators is being assessed. So, many of these companies, if you work as a subtitler for a preferred vendor, will have different ways in which they will be assessing your work. So, one way for us to defend our work and say this is high-quality human-produced subtitling work is by proving that we know what are the metrics for translation quality and making sure that subtitles are as good as possible.

Now, there are other small innovations down the line. I was preparing these slides the other day when I came across this new TTAL, which is an acronym that Netflix is using for... It's a new system for them to basically streamline subtitling and dubbing because that's also one of the things we've been struggling with as an industry.

So, making both dubbing and subtitling more homogeneous. Sometimes, moving from dubbing to subtitling was incompletely direct or straightforward. Sometimes the subtitles would have to be done from scratch. This is something that they're also looking at with technologies and looking at scripting.

Now, all of these technologies that I've been mentioning have plenty to do with cloud systems. We switched in the last decade, especially in the last few years, from desktop-based software to cloud-based ecosystems.

I remember when I was asking subtitling trainers back in 2016 whether they used any cloud-based subtitling platforms in their subtitling courses. Most of them, 15 out of 17, said no. They weren't using any cloud-based platforms.

When I did research between 2017 and 2019 with the students, as you can see, not even 20 students out of 240 had used any cloud-based platforms. So, that's my second and third questions to you. So, hopefully, Irene, if you're kind enough to launch the third question.

IRENE: The third one or the second one?

ALEJANDRO: The third one. Sorry. The second one, second one.

IRENE: Sorry. So, it's launched.

ALEJANDRO: So, my second question to you is, 'Have you ever heard of any cloud-based subtitling systems?' These can be proprietary, such as Deluxe One, iMediaTrans or Netflix Originator. They can also be commercial, the OONA tool, for instance. Or they can be of any other kind. Have you ever come across any of those?

Okay. So that's quite representative. 11 out of 13. 11 have come across these cloud-based systems. As you can see, this confirms that, in the last few years, we've come across much more often with these platforms.

Irene, if you're kind enough to launch the third question.

IRENE: Launched it.

ALEJANDRO: Thank you.

It is 'OK, you've heard of them, but have you used them?' Perhaps, you have used... There should be one that is 'Yes, some of them,' but try to click on the ones that you have used the most. Proprietary means for Netflix or any preferred vendor and commercial, a cloud-based platform such as

OOONA with a license, or freeware, Amara or YouTube Studio. You don't pay. Which ones have you used?

Okay, so only four of you haven't used them, whereas five of you have used freeware and three of you commercial. So, I guess the OOONA tool because it's one of the few options available. Although there are other companies that are looking at commercial tools as well. Proprietary for some of you who are working in the industry. Okay. I think that's more representative of the 2021 landscape.

If you take a look at this chart... I've just used a blue square for all the audiovisual translation tools that are currently available on the cloud. I'm pretty sure the landscape looks quite different to what it did a few years back. But, nowadays 2021, all of those project management tools, dubbing editors, and subtitling editors are working exclusively or partially on the cloud. That's how we see where the market is going.

I would like to draw on yet another quote from Chris Fetner. He said, "That's one of the superpowers that Netflix always had - its incredible insight into their viewer consumption model." He was referring to consumption and abandonment data. Of course, Netflix and the likes of Netflix, so other video-on-demand platforms, are gathering plenty of data on how we consume their programmes. They know what we watch, how we watch it, whether we finish TV series or not, what it is that we like, what we are using our thumbs up for, etc.

Something that Netflix realised is that English is no longer the primary view in language. The number of users that are non-US-based has grown exponentially, as you see on the chart. We've got 73, I think that's million, users that are not in the US. Most of them are not native English speakers.

On the other hand, we've got the dubbing revolution. Research at Netflix has also allowed us to understand that whenever we watch programmes in our language, we are more prone to finishing that TV series.

Netflix has chiefly become a linguistic playground. That's because they've basically taken stock of the dubbing that has been doing other languages, and they're now doing plenty of dubbing into English. This dubbing is becoming more mainstream.

But there are some researchers, like my colleague Lydia Hayes, who are looking at how linguistic variation affects programmes, the dubbing of programmes. So, for instance, she's been looking at how domesticating or foreignising accents have been used in different programmes in English. Why? Because English dubbing has been eminently characterised by videogame speech, videogame dubbing, whereas now students are becoming more eager to do just a different approach. Why? Of course, because the audience, audiences are not welcoming those dubs.

Let me just throw some data to you. My colleague Lydia Hayes and I have recently built a corpus of Castilian Spanish films and series distributed on Netflix, both in Ireland and the UK. We finished our corpus last week, so this is quite recent. We found out that there's a total of 82 programmes, again Castilian Spanish only, so peninsular Spanish, which comprises 54 films and 28 TV series.

So, we set out to see how many of those were dubbed. As it turns out, 26 films and 23 TV series have been dubbed into English.

Then, we looked at the different dubbing strategies because this, of course, is confirming one trend, which is Netflix is going towards more dubbing, mainstream dubbing in English. But we also wanted to know what are the strategies. We found out that most of the dubbings had followed standardising approach. Most of them were done in the US, so in Los Angeles, whereas others were done in Canada. Whereas for TV series, the ones that were domesticated, so using local, regional accents in English, were from Britain. I think we can also agree that we're quite reluctant to see foreignised or standardised accents in the UK.

This, of course, has to do, again, with what the clients say. That's because, back in 2019, Netflix had to basically redub some of the series or at least one, which was *Money Heist (La casa de papel)*, one of the main Spanish TV series that is being distributed by Netflix. They realised that the audience didn't like the dubbing. They said it sounded too standardised, it sounded too artificial, and that they wanted something that sounded less dubby. So, are we witnessing a new wave of domesticating practices, as we had in Spain a few years back? Time will tell.

### **What's on the horizon?**

I'm just wrapping up here. So, we've got new viewing habits. Even though I mentioned binge-watching and hybrid viewing habits, I think we can agree that there will be more with newer generations, further automation. That's integrating artificial intelligence, like what we saw with lips-sync and artificial lip-syncing, and automatic speech recognition combined with neural machine translation. Then, we see this guy trying to amend the errors. So, I think that's what we have in the short run.

So, hopefully, in the long run, they will work better, particularly in cloud systems, as I also mentioned. So, more post-editing and more quality control. For any translator trainer in the room, that's something that we certainly need to incorporate and to do more in the classroom and more mainstream dubbing in English. Some of which is being done remotely due to the pandemic. So, new cloud systems are being devised for voice talents to work from home.

I'm very conscious of time, and one of my questions for you was 'What did I miss?' I've just tried to bring you this quite comprehensive landscape of things that are going on in the localisation industry. Now it's over to you. What do you think? What have I missed? Have you got any questions?

## QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

IRENE: Thank you, Alejandro.

There was a comment by Julieta Cabrera when you were mentioning TV binge-watching and so on. I said I would comment on that when we got to the questions. If you don't mind, we'll start with that. She mentioned that Netflix is going back to the old practices, releasing weekly episodes of certain series instead of entire seasons. What do you think about that?

ALEJANDRO: Yeah. I think it goes in line with what I've mentioned about this article from the *Times*. That some people have had enough of binge-watching, and Netflix is definitely looking at how clients respond, how they perceive their strategies. Some TV series are still being released in batches or in bulk. But in all fairness, if you've got some examples of those series. I personally haven't seen those series are an example of a series that they're now releasing weekly. Those episodes. But it wouldn't surprise me. Just because, as I said, they look at the data, at how people engage or disengage with a programme, and act accordingly and very promptly. They're quite fast at making those changes. As you've seen, we've changed, we've witnessed so many changes in just a few years.

"I think *Luis Miguel series* last season was released like that." Okay, good to know. Good to know.

IRENE: I was reading.

So, yeah, I was mentioning if anyone has any other questions. Blanca, you can be the first one.

BLANCA: Thank you, Alejandro. I learnt a lot from this presentation and made a lot of notes. If I had to answer your question, I would say that you didn't miss anything, at least I can't tell what you missed. So, really thank you for such an inspiring seminar. My question is regarding this corpus that you mentioned, which you've compiled with Lydia Hayes. Is this available for other researchers to look at, or are you already planning to publish

something that we can consult now? Because I think there's lots of data that we may want to have a look at. Thanks.

ALEJANDRO: We're trying, Blanca. Thank you so much for your kind words. This is a...

BLANCA: Thank you, and Irene, for organising this.

IRENE: You're welcome.

ALEJANDRO: So, Blanca, we will hopefully be able to share these figures after the summer. We're looking at publishing this data as soon as possible because we are very much aware that things change swiftly, and that's why I said we collated this corpus up to the 29th of June. I'm pretty sure that, in just one week, there have been changes because there are some series that suddenly disappear and some that suddenly appear.

But what we know for sure is that Netflix started dubbing into English back in 2017 and that there are only a few series that are backdated. So, most TV series date from 2017 onwards and just a couple of them were released on Spanish television and then redubbed. Whereas almost no film made it to the mainstream dubbing if they were released before 2017.

BLANCA: Just a tiny bad question. Well, I need to... Let me come back later. I need to think about the question. Sorry. Yeah, thanks.

IRENE: Thank you, Blanca. It would be very much... I would also be very much interested in those figures because this dubbing into dialects is quite a new thing. I mean, it might be interesting to see what they're doing.

Saeed also had a question. So, please, Saeed.

SAEED: Okay. Hello, everyone. Thank you so much, Alejandro, for this wonderful presentation. This is Saeed. I guess some of you may know me from the translation literature. I guess I missed something in your presentation. So, my apologies if the question sounds less scanty.

You mentioned that Netflix is putting some effort to make dubbed products look and sound less dubby. I didn't get the concept of 'less dubby'. Can you elaborate more on this concept? I'd really appreciate that.

ALEJANDRO: Absolutely. Yeah. So, Netflix... Well, let's come back to the basis. So, English dubbing, the mainstream English dubbing, has traditionally been videogames, cartoons, animation, perhaps some corporate videos, but mainly videogames and animation. This means that most of the voice actors came from this videogame background. They have this standard accent and variety that they would apply to their diction, to their performance. What was found was that *La casa de papel* (*Money Heist*) was dubbed in a standard variety.

So, there was no flavour. There was not local, regional Spanish flavour. Whereas there are other series that have used foreignising approaches. They have used Hispanic, Chicanos, or other kinds of Latin American voice actors, who happened to be in Los Angeles, and added a bit of foreign accent to their series.

Then, there's the UK landscape. As you may know, whenever they dub, also for newsreels, they always add this kind of domesticating approach or domesticating accent. Well, it was found out through research and through the reception of the series that viewers wanted a more domestic version. So, if you take a look at *La casa de papel*, there was a dubbing done back in 2017, and they redubbed the whole two seasons, the first two seasons in 2019. So that, it was made more similar to the third season that they dubbed in a more colourful, playful variety. Hopefully, I've answered your question.

SAEED: Yes, thank you so much. That was a very insightful presentation. I really appreciate that. Thank you so much.

ALEJANDRO: Thank you.

IRENE: Thank you very much. Any other questions?

Well, Blanca, you can have your tiny back question for the moment.

BLANCA: Okay, thanks. I just needed to rephrase it in my head. This corpus that you mentioned. What kind of material did you gather? Was it a multimodal

corpus with the video, then you tagged it or is it just linguistic? Well, it's a lot of work if it's linguistic, but just to know. Thanks.

ALEJANDRO: No. I mean, it's just two of us. So, that would be a humongous thing to do.

BLANCA: That's a key point.

ALEJANDRO: No, what I mean is we've taken stock of what has been done and established a set of criteria. Some of the criteria would be the year of release, original production, dubbing directors, which dubbing studio did the dubbing, so whether they were in Los Angeles, London.

We've got a few in Europe and Canada as well. We've got some Scandinavian countries which have done the dubbing of some TV series. Although some of them, not mainly for Castilian Spanish but yet are quite representative. My colleague Lydia and I have been looking at how accents were conveyed.

So, we wouldn't go as far as saying there are five characters who speak x, and there are six characters who speak y. We just look at it quite holistically and see what the main approach was. Because what we found out was that the dubbing studio would take one main approach.

We found that, for instance, for some series, younger generations would have a standard American accent, whereas older generations would have a foreign accent, a Hispanic accent. This would be... So, the series... I can't remember the title now. I can tell you later, but the one with Carmen Maura. It's a miniseries with Carmen Maura. She had a very thick Hispanic accent, and 20-year-old characters would speak in fluent American standard accent.

BLANCA: That's very interesting. Thanks. Thank you both.

IRENE: Very interesting. Also, because some of these stories will be set in Spain, for example, and no migrants would be appraisers. That would be very much different from the research I undertook. Well, any other questions?

I would like to... If you don't mind, we might finish the seminar. I would like to thank Alejandro for this very interesting presentation and for sharing even this recent research. Ana wishes you all the luck with it. Again, I thank all the attendances and participants for sharing this afternoon with us.

As I mentioned at the beginning, this seminar will be later made accessible and available on the COST Action LEAD-ME website. So, we might probably inform you when it is published. Once again, thank you, and I wish you a very happy and hopefully restful summer.

ALEJANDRO: Thank you all for making it to the end. Thank you so much.

IRENE: Thank you. Bye, bye.

ALEJANDRO: Thanks.