LEAD ME Winter Training School Madrid 2021

**Media Accessibility Training: Sign Language and Subtitling
for the Deaf and Hard-of-hearing
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Contents

- What **subtitles** are and should be

- Essential **conventions**

- Potential changes

Producing subtitles

- **Condensation** of the original message

- Linguistics and audiovisual translation

- **Intralinguistic and interlinguistic** transformations

Other media

- The case of **cinema** and **television**

- Subtitle layout and synchrony

- Proficient editing → better user experience

Our case studies

- Selection of a few final products

- **Critical analysis** and practical applications

- Summary of findings

How to proceed

- General description of the video game

- Observations on the clips and screenshots

- **Error detection** and suggestions for improvement

Case study one

Back to the Future: The Game (Telltale Games, 2010)

- Genre: Graphic adventure

- Source of the cutscenes: Gamer's Little Playground

Case study one: preliminaries

(1) Subtitle position

(2) **Pop-on** or **roll-up**?

(3) Synchronisation

Case study one: criticism

- Poor synchrony

- Distracting roll-up presentation   **LINK**

- **Superimposition** of text and image

Case study two

Catherine (Atlus, 2011)

- Genre: Adventure game

- Source of the cutscenes: UPlayNetwork

Case study two: preliminaries (i)

(1) **Paralinguistic** elements

(2) Cultural differences → Localisation

(3) Idiosyncratic closed captions [CC]

Case study two: preliminaries (ii)

(1) **Actions** taking place in the centre

(2) The question of **shot changes**   ==LINK==

(3) Quick exchanges and various speakers

Case study two: criticism

- **Shot changes** as the syntax of images

- The importance of **utterance identification**

- **Line length** should be kept in check

Differences

(1) Siren

(2) Breaking news

(3) **Ambient noise** and speaker identification

Case study three

Deadpool (High Moon Studios, 2013)

- Genre: Beat 'em up

- Source of the cutscenes: Red's 3rd Dimension Gaming

Case study three: analysis

(1) SDH only halfway

(2) Absence of mood indicators   **LINK**

(3) **Accents** → from sound back to text

Case study three: criticism

(1) Wrong line divisions

(2) Excessive length

(3) **Low readability**

Case study four

Alien: Isolation (Creative Assembly, 2014)

- Genre: Survival horror

- Source of the cutscenes: Gamer's Little Playground

Case study four: preliminaries

(1) **Line length**

(2) Size and colour   LINK

(3) Speed and synchrony

Case study four: criticism

- **Unreadable** font

- Excessive amount of text

- Literal transcript

Case study five

Castlevania: Lords of Shadow 2 (Mercury Steam, 2014)

- Genre: Action adventure

- Source of the cutscenes: IZUNIY

LINK

Case study five: criticism

(1)   Wrong line divisions

(2)   Unresolved question of **accent**

(3)   **Non-SDH** → Traditional subtitle

Case study six

Halo 5 (343 Industries, 2015)

- Genre: First person shooter

- Source of the cutscenes: IZUNIY

LINK

Case study six: criticism

- Needs condensation

- **Inadequate subtitle layout**

- Missing SDH nuances

How to cope

(1) Sound landscape → Enriched text

(2) Controller vibration

(3) Redefine the concept of SDH in video games

Guidelines

General level

Degree of **faithfulness**: subtitles vs. transcripts

Subtitle **typology**: traditional vs. SDH

Normativity: idiosyncratic vs. conventional

Relationship between sound and text

- Dialogue, music and soundtrack
- Tagging or speaker **identification**
- Text on screen or in-game instructions
- Paralinguistic elements and **onomatopoeia**
- Didascalic **mood** indicators

Purely textual level

Sequencing; maximum number of lines per subtitle; line divisions; shot changes; **speed** measured in CPS; orthography and typography; capitalisation; **emphasis**; use of **italics**.

Final questions

(1) Where do the inconsistencies lie?

(2) Do norms restrict creative freedom and originality?

More info:

Costal, T. (2020). *Why is that creature grunting?* The use of SDH subtitles in video games from an accessibility perspective. *Audiovisual Translation in Applied Linguistics. Educational perspectives*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

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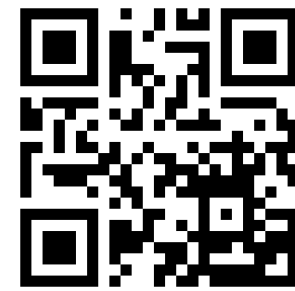
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