UNIT 3A. EASY-TO-UNDERSTAND (E2U) AND SUBTITLING

ELEMENT 1. PROCESSES

WHAT ARE E2U SUBTITLES?

Video Lecture Transcript

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This is Unit 3A, E2U and subtitling; Element 1. Processes, video lecture: What are E2U subtitles?

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This video lecture introduces the concept of E2U subtitles and their characteristics. We will also discuss briefly what constraints influence the creation process, and what type of guidelines we can use.

The focus in the video lecture is on pre-recorded subtitles.

At this stage, we assume that you already have basic skills in creating subtitles. If this is not the case, we recommend you to acquire some knowledge before attending the video lecture. For instance, we recommend you to visit Module 1 of the EU co-funded project Interlingual Live Subtitling for Access, in short ILSA.

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E2U subtitles aim to support viewers in the meaning-making process when they are watching an audiovisual product, for instance, a video, a movie, or the news.

To do so, E2U subtitles resort to simplification methods.

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E2U subtitles can be then classified according to different criteria, such as the type of simplification.

E2U subtitles can use text simplification methods, such as Easy-to-Read or Plain Language, but it is also possible to use graphical simplification methods, for instance, easy pictograms. One example of the use of pictograms would be the use of emoticons in a subtitling line for expressing feelings and emotions.

Of course, you can also have mixed forms. You can have text simplification methods and graphical simplification methods in one subtitle line.

Ultimately, the decision concerning the type of simplification will depend on many factors as in other translation, actually. It will depend on the translation order, that means the preferences of the client, also on the target audience, the target language, the genre, and the medium of publication.

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Easy-to-understand subtitles can also be classified according to the target language. For instance, they can be interlingual and use a different language as in the source text, or subtitles can be intralingual and use the same language as in the source text.

For instance, E2U subtitles which have been translated from German into Spanisch would be interlingual, while E2U subtitles that have been translated from standard Spanish into E2U Spanish would be intralingual.

In several countries, intralingual subtitles are also called "captions" or subtitles for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing. This is often abbreviated as SDH subtitles. In this video lecture, I will use the term "subtitle" to refer to both intralingual and interlingual subtitles.

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E2U subtitles are subjected to different types of constraints. The first type emerges from the audiovisual nature of the product, meaning the limited time and space that we have for a subtitle line.

The other types of constraints are or emerge from the simplification method. What I mean here is that E2U subtitles have been compliant with the principles and recommendations of whatever simplification method is being used.

Lastly, another constraint that we face in the creation of E2U subtitles is the lack of empirically-based guidelines. This lack of guidelines is translating at the moment into different subtitling practices and the use of different subtitling parameters.

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The lack of guidelines for E2R subtitling can be solved by resorting to other subtitling guidelines, for instance, we could use the guidelines for subtitling for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing, especially, for those persons with pre-locutive hearing loss.

Why? Well, because this type of guidelines has shown to be beneficial for other parts of the population. For instance, for persons who have a low level of literacy, the elderly, or persons who have a limited command a language, be it because they are second-language learners or, for instance, immigrants upon arrival in a host country.

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Although we see that the target groups overlap to some extent, we should keep in mind that the primary users of SDH and those of E2U subtitles, they also have different needs. For instance, E2U users often do not have a sensory impairment, meaning that they do not have a hearing loss, and, therefore, they receive the audiovisual content multimodally, that is they hear and see the content.

We must also keep in mind that E2U users may not be familiar with the conventions that are used in SDH subtitling, for instance, the use of colours for identifying a speaker, or the addition of contextual information, such as "[laughing]", when a person is laughing, and you can hear it, but you cannot see the person on the screen.

Conversely, E2U audiences, especially E2R users, are used to own conventions such as the use of digits for all numbers. That is to also use digits for the numbers 1 to ten, which are often spelt out in the standard language.

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Let´s recap at this stage. In this video lecture, we have classified E2U subtitles by the type of simplification method and by the type of target languages.

We have also seen the constrains that we will face during the creation. And we have discussed the extent to which we can use SDH guidelines as well as the limitation of the use of these guidelines.

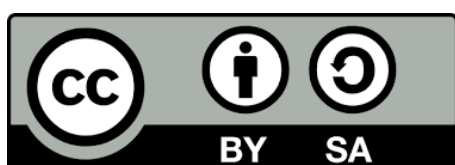In the next video lecture, we will talk about E2U subtitling parameters for creation.

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This video lecture has been prepared by Rocío Bernabé, from the Internationale Hochschule SDI München in Germany in collaboration with the Universidade de Vigo, in Spain.

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