Investigating a Multidimensional Framework for Subtitling Quality

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Theoretical Framework

Adopting an **informational perspective**, mediated through the lens of **accessibility studies**, allows us to create a **meta-model** of quality: the **Media Accessibility Quality** (MAQ) meta-model.

The MAQ Meta-model

Access is the ground upon which the identification of dimensions and their mutual relationships should be based.

The meta-model can be used to analyse **current models**, identify **problems**, and devise **solutions**.

Core Assumptions of MAQ

Quality is **multidimensional**: vagueness can be operationalised into **various dimensions** (accuracy, segmentation, etc.), **which jointly concur to define quality**.

Dimensions can be **organised** into macro- and sub-dimensions.

Quality interpreted in terms of **fitness for purpose**: dimensions do not indicate intrinsic properties (e.g. of subtitles). They depend on **context, purpose, and stakeholders.**

The **identification of dimensions** can be reached through a **collaborative effort** among the stakeholders.

The Project

A focus on **subtitling quality** (SQ), both live and pre-recorded:

1. Analyse current models and identify problems and missing dimensions;

2. Devise a list of dimensions, then organise and group them;

3. Define mutual connections among dimensions;

4. Provide a definition for each dimension;

5. Validate the list and the definitions with stakeholders.

Analysis of SQ Models: Some Problems

Many models focus on **a few specific dimensions,** while ignoring or minimising the role of others.

The use of those models often embeds a **synecdochal fallacy**: they refer to, discuss, and draw conclusions on quality per se, not just on those few dimensions.

Most focus on **translation-related dimensions** (e.g. accuracy), ignoring or minimising the role of **non-translation-based dimensions** (e.g. latency) in guaranteeing access.

They usually result from a **top-down** process, and are not grounded upon a collaborative agreement among all stakeholders.

Excerpt of SQ Model(s) based on MAQ

Based on MAQ, **two SQ (meta)models** were devised: pre-recorded and live subtitles.

For each model:

- First, a list of dimensions was defined;

- Second, dimensions were grouped into macro- and sub-dimensions;

- Third, mutual relationships and connections among dimensions were identified and/or defined.

- Finally, a value definition was provided for each dimension.

Excerpt:

- Macro-dimensions: **Visual appearance**, Speed, Content, Personalisation, …

- Subdimensions of "**Visual appearance**": Font, Colours, **Position**, Size, Lines, …

- Value definition of "**Position**" : "not blocking key visual information (i.e. moved around screen when necessary)".

Next Steps

Validate each model with stakeholders, through a democratic and anonymous process, in order to reach a final model mutually agreed upon by all.