Workshop 3:
Developing and delivering
a training course in subtitling

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What kind of training course?

- Module on undergraduate degree
- Module on postgraduate degree
- Intensive short duration (e.g. 1-week courses)
- Introductory seminar

MA module in AVT

Parameters:

12 weeks

2 hour seminar per week

Combination practical and theoretical assessment

15-credit unit (1/8 of taught component of degree)

Optional programme

Benefits of the module

- Industry-relevant training (but issues in the industry; price dumping)
- Attractive and engaging to students
- Transferable skills: attention to detail; technical competence; cultural competence; multimodal awareness; editing and revision

'Spot the mistake' exercise

We'll deal with the problem between you and I later.

Module aims

- To develop an awareness and understanding of the concept and process of interlingual subtitling
- To explore and appreciate the linguistic and translational conventions and constraints involved in subtitling in relation to theories and practices of written translation

Module aims

- To explore and appreciate the technical/ technological conventions, constraints, rules and guidelines involved in the production of subtitles which derive from the interference of the oral, visual and audio information of the film/TV programme and which decisively affect the above linguistic/ translational aspect of subtitling

- To enable students to apply the above mentioned conventions and constraints to the process of translating audiovisual material

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of this unit students will be expected to be able to:

- Identify, discuss and critically analyse and evaluate professional samples of subtitled audiovisual material according to linguistic and technical criteria

- Perform all the stages involved in the subtitling practice, i.e. apply the linguistic/translational and technical/technological rules and conventions of subtitling along with the critical knowledge gained by analysing professionally produced subtitles in the creative process of writing subtitles for foreign audiovisual material and place the subtitles onto video

Learning outcomes

- Discuss and justify choices, decisions and strategies employed in order to perform the subtitling task and reach a satisfactory result both from a linguistic/ translational and a technical aspect

- Evaluate own subtitling outcome in relation to professional practices

- Research for, obtain and study relevant bibliographical material (in addition to the indicative readings provided by the unit coordinator) in order to use, communicate and critically discuss the ideas and information presented in this material

Syllabus

- Week 1   Introduction to Audiovisual Translation
- Week 2   Introduction to Subtitling
- Week 3   Subtitling Conventions I: Compression, Deletion, Subtitle Composition
- Week 4   Subtitling Conventions 2: Punctuation
- Week 5   Ethics, politics and culture in subtitling
- Week 6   Professional guest speaker
- Weeks 7-12 Workshops

Curriculum content

- Context of subtitling
- Technical history of subtitling
- Dialogue lists
- Software familiarity ('Wincaps' demo)
- Spotting/cueing/timing
- Editing and shot changes
- Subtitle layout norms
- Condensation and paraphrase (inc. 'censorship')
- Cultural issues

What is a Time Code?

An 8-digit 'address' for every frame of a videotape/ film. A time code tells you to within 1/25th of a second (PAL video) when a particular frame will appear on the screen:

<div align="center">

01:40:32:06

</div>

hours : minutes : seconds : frames

What is a Time Code?

Timing/Spotting/Cueing 1

The purpose of **spotting** is to ensure **synchronicity between the spoken word and the subtitle.** Spotting, or the identification of **in** and **out** times, takes account of:

- the rhythm of the film
- the speech rhythms of characters
- viewers' reading speed/rhythm
- cuts and sound bridges

Timing/Spotting/Cueing 2

In and out times were often provided on the dialogue list, which in this case is called a **master list.** Technology now allows translators to do their own spotting. For financial reasons, big multilingual subtitling projects tend to use template files (why might these be problematic?)

'Shot change' rule

❖ Subtitles should not cross a shot, and should remain at least 2 frames clear of the shot change on either side.

What is film made of?

- "The **shot** is the basic unit of film construction; it is defined, physically, as a single piece of film, without breaks in the continuity of the action" (Monaco 1981: 104). It may last from 1/24 of a second (1 frame) to ten minutes (most cameras only hold 10 minutes of film). A standard feature may have up to a thousand separate shots or more.

What is film made of?

A **cut** or **shot change** separates one shot from another. When working with physical film (e.g. 16mm, 35mm) the cut involves cutting of the film strip for the purposes of editing. A **sound bridge** occurs when the sound is continuous across a shot change.

What is film made of?

A **frame** is "an individual still image of a film or video, or the rectangle within which the image is composed or captured" (BFI 2003). Film normally runs at a rate of 24 frames per second. PAL video (used in the UK) runs at 25 frames per second. Digital video may run at a much faster frame rate.

What is film made of?

- The process of cutting film and assembling a series of shots to constitute the finished product is known as **editing**.

What editing feature?

What do the following clips have in common?
Goodfellas (
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iayYZLB__5Y)
and this advertisement for Old Spice (
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=owGykVbfgUE).

Curriculum content:

- Fiction film
- Documentary film
- Other forms of AV product? (advertising; user-generated content)
- Swearing
- Technical language
- Cultural issues
- Poetic language
- Creativity and rhyme

Core reading

- Díaz Cintas, J. and A. Remael. (2007). *Audiovisual Translation: Subtitling*. Manchester: St. Jerome.

- Software supplied in demo version (Wincaps)

Assessment

A written assignment in which students are asked to prepare the subtitles for a c.5-minute audiovisual excerpt (normally supplied by the tutor) and write a commentary of 2000-2500 words on the subtitling process, translational and technical issues encountered, strategies employed to overcome them, justification of choices made and an overall evaluation of the student's own work. This assignment is worth 100% of the mark for this unit.

Challenges

- Software limitations
- Copyright
- => time for identifying and digitising clips
- Many languages on unit (up to 11 source languages) – how to identify suitable clips
- Professional input
- Keeping up to date with rapid changes
- Marking student work (extra language markers needed)

Overall aim

- Students gradually move away from the wording of the text. Greatest challenges are not spotting, but sufficient condensation of the text, and attention to detail

Resources

- http://www.subtitlingworldwide.com/whygoodisimportant.html (for an example of the same clip subtitled well and subtitled badly)

- http://www.intralinea.org/specials/respeaking - open access journal special issue on respeaking/live subtitling. (Some articles in Italian)

- http://www.semainedusoustitrage.org/television/article/sous-titreur-un-metier

A short film in French about subtitling as a career.