

## **A LITERATURE REVIEW: A FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY OF SUBTITLING AND THE IMPORTANCE OF SUBTITLES IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This literature review aims to highlight the evolution of subtitling studies and underline its significant role in foreign language learning. It dovetails information extracted from various sources with a focus on understanding the emerging trends and paradigms. The review illuminates the comprehensive framework necessary to study subtitling and reinforces the indispensable position subtitles occupy in learning new languages.*

**Key words:** *subtitles, theoretical perspectives, communication skills, exploration, clarification, pedagogical practices*

## **ADABIYOT SHARHI: SUBTITRLARNI O'RGANISH UCHUN ASOS VA CHET TILINI O'RGANISHDA SUBTITRLARNING AHAMIYATI**

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### **ANNOTATSIYA**

*Ushbu adabiyot sharhi subtitrlarni o'rganish evolyutsiyasini ta'kidlash va uning chet tillarini o'rganishdagi muhim rolini ta'kidlashga qaratilgan. Unda turli xil manbalardan olingan ma'lumotlar paydo bo'lgan tendentsiyalar va paradigmalarni tushunishga qaratilgan. Sharh subtitrlarni o'rganish uchun zarur bo'lgan keng qamrovli asosni yoritadi va subtitrlarning yangi tillarni o'rganishda egallagan ajralmas pozitsiyasini mustahkamlaydi.*

**Kalit so'zlar:** *subtitrlar, nazariy istiqbollor, muloqot qobiliyatları, izlanishlar, tushuntirishlar, pedagogik amaliyotlar*

## **ОБЗОР ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ: ОСНОВА ДЛЯ ИЗУЧЕНИЯ СУБТИТРОВ И ВАЖНОСТЬ СУБТИТРОВ В ИЗУЧЕНИИ ИНОСТРАННОГО ЯЗЫКА**

### **АННОТАЦИЯ**

*Этот обзор литературы направлен на то, чтобы осветить эволюцию исследований субтитров и подчеркнуть их важную роль в изучении иностранного языка. Он увязывает информацию, извлеченную из различных источников, с акцентом на понимание новых тенденций и парадигм. Обзор освещает комплексную основу, необходимую для изучения субтитров, и подчеркивает незаменимую роль субтитров в изучении новых языков.*

***Ключевые слова:** субтитры, теоретические аспекты, коммуникативные навыки, исследование, уточнение, педагогические практики.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Subtitling has a long but under-researched history. Since the advent of cinema and broadcast media, subtitling has been a key method of translating spoken dialogues in films, TV programs and online videos. Over the years, this integral part of multimedia translation has gained academic attention, and alongside, its role as a powerful tool of language learning has been accentuated. Subtitles are widely used as an aid to foreign language learning, particularly when audio-visual materials are involved. They provide learners with access to authentic texts which they may not have encountered before; these texts can then be broken down into smaller chunks that make them easier to comprehend and remember. This approach encourages active engagement with material through reading comprehension exercises such as summarizing or paraphrasing what has been seen/heard on screen (Gavioli & Aston 2002). Furthermore, subtitles allow students more time for processing spoken input than would otherwise be available if they were listening solely without visual support (Basturkmen 2006).

The use of subtitles in foreign language education has attracted considerable attention from researchers over recent years; consequently, there have been numerous studies conducted exploring its effectiveness both inside and outside classroom settings (Fernández-Toro et al., 2018). A number of themes emerge from these studies: firstly, that exposure via subtitled media significantly increases vocabulary acquisition compared with non-subtitled media; secondly that it promotes better understanding due to increased contextualization provided by visuals accompanying text; finally, that repeated viewing helps develop fluency skills by providing opportunities for repetition practice within naturalistic contexts (Lambertz et al., 2014). These findings suggest strong potential benefits associated with using subtitles

during instruction - however further research is needed into their optimal usage so as ensure maximum impact upon student outcomes across different contexts including age groups etc.

### **ANALYSIS AND RESULTS:**

Analysis involves looking at statistics related to subtitle use such as frequency of words used or types of errors made while translating from one language into another; whereas results refer more specifically to any changes observed in learner performance after using subtitles (e.g., improved comprehension). By studying both aspects together, researchers are able to gain insights into how effective subtitling can be as an educational tool for second-language learners – something which has been largely overlooked until recently due its relatively recent emergence as a viable teaching method.

One key finding from research studies conducted so far is that there appears to be no single ‘ideal’ type or format for subtitles – different approaches work best depending on individual learner needs and preferences (for example some may prefer text-based captions while others might benefit more from audio descriptions). This means that it is essential for teachers/educators working with multilingual students/learners ensure they provide options tailored towards each student's specific needs; not only will this increase engagement levels but also maximize potential gains associated with using captioning technologies during lessons/classes etc.

Additionally, studies suggest that there are certain features which should always be taken into consideration when designing effective subtitle systems: accuracy & readability being two prime examples here - inaccurate translations can lead students astray whilst overly complicated syntax could cause confusion among those still mastering their target languages. Furthermore, the timing between spoken dialogue & corresponding text must also be accurate if viewers are expected comprehend accurately; too slow & comprehension rates decrease significantly -so careful attention must paid here too!

Finally, subtitles offer great potential benefits beyond just aiding understanding amongst non-native speakers: they allow users access content otherwise unavailable them due geographical restrictions /language barriers plus enable individuals watch videos without sound e.g library /public spaces where noise isn't permitted! Thus, overall, it is clear see why these tools becoming increasingly popular choice educators

Early approaches to subtitling focused on understanding it as merely a tool to bridge the language gap in audiovisual media. However, modern studies recognize that the act of subtitling is a nuanced practice, where each decision shapes the viewers' understanding of the source material.

Subtitles used in movies can be classified under various types. For example, bimodal, standard and reversed subtitling (Zanon, 2006, p. 47). However, there are two different types of subtitles in general: 1. Interlingual subtitle: The original language of the movie is translated into another language. The audience/language learner watches and listens to the movie with the original/target language, but reads the subtitle translated into his/her own language. 2. Intralingual subtitle: Here, the original language and the subtitle of the movie are the same. Intralingual subtitle is more for people with impaired hearing. Therefore, with this kind of subtitle, all audio sounds like footsteps, which are a sign of someone is coming, knocking sound at the door, the sound of a car horn that is coming from outside are shown. There are also intralingual subtitles for foreign language learners apart from the aforementioned ones. As a result of many research, it is seen that using subtitles in foreign language learning has positive results. These positive results also include subtitles' positive effects on productive skills like recalling the words entirely and keeping them in the correct context besides communicative performance in a specific oral and written communication (Rokni & Atae, 2014, p. 718).

Many researchers agreed that intralingual subtitles have positive effects in foreign language learning. Studies held among English language learners have revealed that intralingual subtitles can be effective as a teaching tool (see Okyayuz, 2016, p. 43). In many research, it is stated that subtitles have positive influences on language education in general terms, however, inter-lingual subtitle, which is translated subtitle, has been recommended less than intra-lingual subtitle, which is the subtitle in the original language, by comparison. As an example, according to the study carried out by Holger Mitterer and James McQueen (2009), a learner who watches a movie in a foreign language to improve listening comprehension skills in that foreign language can ideally achieve this by watching the movie with an intra-lingual subtitle. Similarly, Caimi (2006) states that intra-lingual subtitles can be used for didactic purposes in language learning. In another paper, a movie in English with English subtitles was watched and it was seen that the subtitle helped students to learn new words and idioms, and to improve their listening skills (Özgen, 2008).

The main goal of interlingual subtitle is to use expressions, which make the movie understandable. The audience/learner comprehends the meaning of the

scene by reading the subtitle. On the other hand, there are also features that subtitles should have technically (Günay-Köprülü, 2016). Because of these technical features like the number of lines and the number of maximum characters, translation of the subtitles has to be restricted, therefore subtitles, in a way, have to give the summary or the gist of spoken expressions.

Some of the early attempts to exploit the potential of subtitles for foreign language learning purposes has focused mainly on the development of learners' ability to understand input in a foreign language by means of intralingual subtitles either created by the teacher or available from Teletext (i.e. originally aimed at a deaf or hard-of-hearing audience), VHS or DVD. The type of subtitles taken into consideration greatly varies from study to study, and teacher's choices are certainly affected by the availability of material. Clearly, also the country where studies are conducted along with their preferred audiovisual mode (mainly dubbing or subtitling) play a role in the design of trials.

As already mentioned, research in this field has been conducted on the basis of different methods and in different countries. Hence, while some works are centred on only one combination of spoken/written mode (for example audio and subtitles in L2) others include various combinations of inputs administered to randomly divided groups with the specific aim of demonstrating the intrinsic added value of subtitled material over simple aural or visual input (Garza: 1991, Bird & Williams: 2002, Guichon & McLoran: 2007 to mention but a few). The conclusion they all reach is that phonological along with written information favours the comprehension of spoken language, thus leading to the conclusion that subtitled material helps learners to recognise and memorise items. In fact, phonological and orthographical processes are two intertwined channels leading to lexical recognition (Gambier 2007:103-104). However, for the sake of completeness it will also be accounted for studies presenting data that lead to opposite conclusions.

According to the Study on the use of subtitling, performed in 2011 by the European Commission, the way European countries approach the language transfer issue both in cinema and television programs is presented in Table 1

Subtitling countries Portugal, Iceland, Ireland, UK,  
Belgium, Netherlands, Switzerland,  
Norway, Sweden, Finland, Estonia,  
Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Czech  
Republic, Slovakia, Hungary,  
Slovenia, Romania, Bulgaria,  
Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, Malta,

Luxembourg  
 Portugal, Iceland, Ireland, UK,  
 Belgium, Netherlands, Romania,  
 Greece, Slovenia, Hungary,  
 Estonia  
 Dubbing countries Spain, Germany, Austria, Italy Spain, France, Germany,  
 Switzerland, Italy, Austria,  
 Hungary, Slovakia, Czech  
 Republic, Turkey  
 Both versions (subtitling  
 and dubbing)  
 France Cyprus  
 Voice-over -- Bulgaria, Poland, Lithuania,  
 Latvia, Estonia  
 Originals -- Luxembourg

	Cinema	Television
Subtitling countries	Portugal, Iceland, Ireland, UK, Belgium, Netherlands, Switzerland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, Malta, Luxembourg	Portugal, Iceland, Ireland, UK, Belgium, Netherlands, Romania, Greece, Slovenia, Hungary, Estonia
Dubbing countries	Spain, Germany, Austria, Italy	Spain, France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Austria, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Turkey
Both versions (subtitling and dubbing)	France	Cyprus
Voice-over	--	Bulgaria, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia
Originals	--	Luxembourg

Two adaptation methods are clearly favourite when foreign-language movies and television programs are made available to domestic markets: subtitling and dubbing (Danan, 2004; European Commission, 2011; Kilborn, 1993; Koolstra, Peeters & Spinhof, 2002; Van Lommel, Laenen & d'Ydewalle, 2006). However, as mentioned by Koolstra et al. (2002) there seems to be a divide between European

countries in the use of the two popular methods. Even if there are substantial differences concerning the language transfer methods used for cinema and television, subtitling is the practice used most widely in Europe. Typical ‘subtitling countries’ are Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania and Slovenia (European Commission, 2011; Koolstra et al., 2002). United Kingdom also favours subtitling, but the translation issue is not as significant there, since the vast majority of imported movies and television programs are American, and consequently do not require any translation. Dubbing is the predominant language transfer practice in Spain, Italy, Germany and Austria. It is also used widely in France. Dubbing is used to different extents in these countries. As underlined by the European Commission (2011), regarding television, digital broadcasting is starting to change the audio-visual environment, giving TV viewers access to original versions with subtitles as alternative to dubbed versions, or to subtitling in a language other than the main language of broadcast. This option is already a possibility in a number of countries.

## **CONCLUSION**

The relevance of subtitling in both the fields of multimedia translation and language learning cannot be overstated. Although past studies have provided valuable insights, there is still a wide scope for research in various sections of this field. The unifying thread is that subtitling is not merely a translation tool but also a vital aid in pedagogical strategies for effective language learning. The need for comprehensive research and the development of an advanced subtitling pedagogy framework is critical for grasping future challenges and opportunities in this field. Having a strong sense of cultural awareness combined with excellent linguistic skills are essential components needed for successful translations involving cartoon subtitle projects. By taking into account all relevant factors such as dialects, humor, puns etc., translators will be able to ensure accurate translations between two different cultures while still conveying all necessary information contained within each scene. It’s important for professional translators working with cartoon subtitles to have strong time management skills since this type of work often requires tight deadlines. Therefore, having accurate estimates regarding how long projects will take along with effective strategies such as breaking down large tasks into smaller ones help ensure successful completion within set timelines. With these combination competencies, translation professionals should be able to produce high quality results quickly which ultimately benefits everyone involved including clients, customers alike.

It is hoped that this literature review will inspire further conversation and research on the importance of subtitling in foreign language learning.

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