

FINAL REPORT



Study on the use of subtitling

The potential of subtitling to encourage foreign language learning and improve the mastery of foreign languages

EACEA/2009/01

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Annex 1 - The context and methodology

Annex 2 – Audiovisual transfer practices and barriers to the use of subtitling

Annex 3 – The role of subtitling in informal learning contexts

Annex 4 - The role of subtitling in formal learning contexts

Annex 5 – The questionnaire-based survey, country by country

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Annex 7 - Measures to maximise the study's visibility

1 Introduction

In various documents published between 2003 and 2008¹, the European Commission presented its approach to developing multilingualism. The key measures outlined in these texts include promoting language learning, linguistic diversity and a multilingual economy, and improving access to legislation, procedures and information on the European Union in citizens' own language.

In September 2008, the Commission published its Communication on 'Multilingualism: an asset for Europe and a shared commitment'². This paper emphasizes the contribution that investing in language training can bring to individuals, enterprises and European society as a whole. It also points out that the media can be a rich source of informal language learning. The Commission went on to launch in May 2010 a study aimed at analysing the potential of subtitling to encourage language learning and enhance foreign language skills.

Duration

The study took place over a 12-month period.

Geographical scope

The study covered the 27 Member States of the European Union, the three countries of the European Economic Area (Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein), as well as Switzerland, Croatia and Turkey, making a total of 33 countries.

Scope of the study

In accordance with the tender specifications, the study focused on the following themes:

1. Description of language transfer practices in the media
2. Analysis of the impact of language transfer practices on the public's ability to speak and/or understand foreign languages
3. Analysis of the correlation between countries where there are high levels of language skills and the tradition of subtitling rather than dubbing
4. Analysis of the relation between knowledge of foreign languages and preference for dubbing or subtitling
5. Analysis of the role of subtitling as a catalyst for language learning
6. Analysis of the educational impact of written and spoken language on the screen
7. Analysis of the impact of subtitling on the integration of immigrants as a means for learning the language of the host country
8. Identification of barriers to the use of subtitling
9. Analysis of the role of subtitling in building a language-friendly environment in Europe

¹ 'Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity : Action Plan 2004-2006'
http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/eu-language-policy/doc112_en.htm;

'A New Framework Strategy for Multilingualism':

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2005:0596:FIN:EN:PDF>;

Final Report of High Level Group on Multilingualism:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lang/doc/multireport_en.pdf;

² Communication on 'Multilingualism: an asset for Europe and a shared commitment'

http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/pdf/com/2008_0566_en.pdf

2 Methodology

The study was conducted using the following methodological tools: documentary research, questionnaire-based surveys and case studies.

Two questionnaire-based surveys were conducted:

- the first addressed themes 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 and 9 mentioned in the above section. This survey targeted a European public divided into three age groups: teenagers aged 12 to 18, young adults aged 18 to 25, and adults over the age of 25. A sample of around 50 people was targeted for each age group, giving a total of at least 150 people in each of the 33 countries covered by the study. The entire sample therefore included 5 966 individuals. In addition to these three age groups, three categories were sampled in Belgium: European affairs professionals, young people aged 25 to 35 looking for a job³ and immigrants, with 50 persons surveyed in each of the latter two categories.
 - The questionnaires were distributed through several channels: a special purpose website (www.europeansubtitling.eu); two discussion forums, one on Facebook and a second on LinkedIn; the cultural services of embassies; the European School in Brussels; 60 'student delegates' of the Centre for Multimedia Studies and Research at University of Mons, Belgium; professional associations such as the International Federation of Translators (IFT), the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC - Association Internationale des Interprètes de Conférence), the International Permanent Conference of University Institutes for Translation and Interpretation Studies (CIUTI - Conférence Internationale Permanente des Instituts Universitaires de Traduction et d'Interprétation); and Media Consulting Group's networks of media professionals.
 - The large size of the sample ensured reliable results and analysis of the findings under the statistical inference⁴ method.
- the second survey focused on theme 4. Two sample groups were created, independent from those of the first survey: a focus group made up of foreign language students and a control group made up of students enrolled in non-language faculties. There were around 5 000 respondents in the sample as a whole, 3 122 in the focus group and 1 850 in the control group.
 - The questionnaire was distributed with the collaboration of foreign language professors from different universities in Europe and via social networks like Facebook.

The case studies were used for themes 1, 5, 6 and 7.

Glossary

'Europe 33': all the countries covered by the study.

'Interlinguistic subtitling': a film in a foreign language subtitled in the learner's language

'Intralinguistic subtitling': a film subtitled in the same language as the original

'Reverse subtitling': a film in the learner's mother tongue, subtitled in a foreign language

'Formal learning contexts' and **'Informal learning contexts':** formal contexts are those where structured learning takes place through the support of a teacher or tutor, and in a special purpose institution. Informal contexts are those where language learning is indirect and can result either from a voluntary initiative or from spontaneous and uncontrolled acquisition. Informal contexts are environments that do not have educational aims.

³ See case study in Annex 4.

⁴ For more information on the methodology, see Annex1.

3 Language transfer practices in the media

Three main language transfer practices exist side by side in Europe for audiovisual works: subtitling, dubbing and voice-over. In addition to these practices there are also self-description, intended for blind or sight-impaired viewers, and subtitling for the deaf or hearing-impaired, which has specific characteristics that make it suited to the needs of this segment of the population.

These techniques are used to translate foreign audiovisual works (films, documentaries, fiction and animation) into the national language.

Language transfer practices vary not only from one country to the next, but sometimes vary within the same country depending on the broadcast medium (cinema or television) or the target public (general public, cinema-enthusiast public, young people, public with accessibility problems).

The two maps presented in the following sections show the distribution of language transfer practices by country for cinema and television. They identify distinct categories of 'subtitling countries', 'dubbing countries', 'voice-over countries' and 'mixed-practices countries'. It should nevertheless be borne in mind that the volume of content to be translated depends on the number of audiovisual works in foreign languages circulating in each country⁵.

To give a few examples, 503 films were released in cinemas in the United Kingdom in 2009⁶, of which 113 national films and 212 US films, for a total of 325 films in English⁷. Therefore only 35% of films released in cinemas needed translation, which explains why the presence of subtitled films may not be highly visible in this 'subtitling' country'. At the opposite extreme are countries like Bulgaria, Belgium, Croatia, Estonia and Iceland, where more than 90% of films require translation. In these countries, national films represent a very small percentage of films released in cinemas and the use of subtitling is much more visible than in the United Kingdom. In countries where national films make up a large component of films on offer, the percentage of films to be translated decreases: this is the case in France (around 54%) and to a lesser extent in Italy (around 68%).

For television broadcasting, the percentage of hours to be dubbed or subtitled also differs from one country to another: it is very low in the United Kingdom (around 23%) and much higher in Flemish-speaking Belgium, Denmark, Norway and Sweden, where it accounts for more than 90% of programming time⁸.

3.1 Map of language transfer practices in cinema

Subtitling is the language transfer practice used most widely in Europe. It concerns 28 countries (26 countries plus two regions in two countries): Belgium (Flemish-speaking), Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland (German-speaking), Turkey and United Kingdom.

⁵ See Annex 2 for an overall table of the circulation of films (in cinemas) in Europe.

⁶ According to data from the European Audiovisual Observatory, Yearbook 2010. These data include Ireland.

⁷ Allowing for exceptions.

⁸ Annex 2 contains an overall table of the hourly volume of audiovisual (TV) content in Europe.

Dubbing is the predominant language transfer practice in Spain, Italy, Germany, Austria, Belgium (French-speaking) and Switzerland (French- and Italian-speaking). It is also used widely in France. Dubbing is used to different extents in these countries.

In **Spain**, dubbing is the dominant practice for both European and American films. Of the total number of European box-office release films in 2009, 53% were released only in a dubbed version and 29% in both (dubbed and subtitled). The share of American films released only in a dubbed version is still higher, accounting for 69% of the total⁹. Spain is made up of autonomous communities, each of which has an official language other than Spanish. Some of these communities have specific language transfer practices. In Catalonia, for example, the 'Ley del Ciné Català' (Catalan Cinema Act) adopted by the Autonomous Parliament of Catalonia on 30 June 2010, establishes that a foreign film released to box offices must have the same percentage of prints dubbed in Catalan as in Spanish.

In **Italy**, dubbing is still the dominant practice (around 89% of European films and 63% of US films), although certain films are also released in a subtitled version¹⁰.

In **France**, the most widespread practice is the dual version: foreign films, whether European or American, are generally released in a number of subtitled prints and another portion in dubbed version¹¹. However, a very small percentage of cinemas programme the films in both versions (3.5% for European films and 2.3% for American films). Most programme films with dubbing (around 53% of cinemas for European films and 82% for American films). It can therefore be argued that the population is exposed to a large extent to dubbing rather than subtitling¹².

In **Germany**, dubbing is the general rule but some films are released in both dubbed and subtitled versions. Subtitling seems to meet the demands of certain segments of the public, particularly for arthouse films. In **Austria**, practices are similar to those in Germany. **Hungary**, traditionally a dubbing country, is increasingly turning to subtitling, although dubbing remains the most widespread practice for television broadcasting.

The **Czech Republic** is increasingly shifting to subtitling: European films released in 2009 were all in the original language with subtitles; American films were released mostly in the original with subtitles (around 75%) and a minority in both subtitled and dubbed versions (around 25%)¹³. **Croatia** is a subtitling country, although a small number of foreign films are distributed in dubbed version or in both dubbed and subtitled versions¹⁴.

So-called 'subtitling countries' do not constitute a uniform bloc. Bilingual subtitling is used in some of these countries: this is the case in Flemish-speaking Belgium, where films are subtitled in French and Flemish; Finland (subtitling in Finnish and Swedish); Luxembourg (subtitling in French and Dutch or German); and Switzerland, for subtitled versions in French- and German-speaking Switzerland (French and German). **Switzerland** is a special case in fact: French- and Italian-speaking Swiss prefer dubbing whereas German-speaking Switzerland tends to use subtitling more often. A number of films are distributed in the original, moreover, with release limited to their language region (French films in French-speaking Switzerland, German or Austrian films in German-speaking Switzerland and Italian films in Ticino).

⁹ Source: Instituto de la Cinematografía y de las Artes Audiovisuales, Spain.

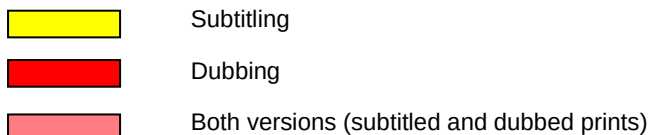
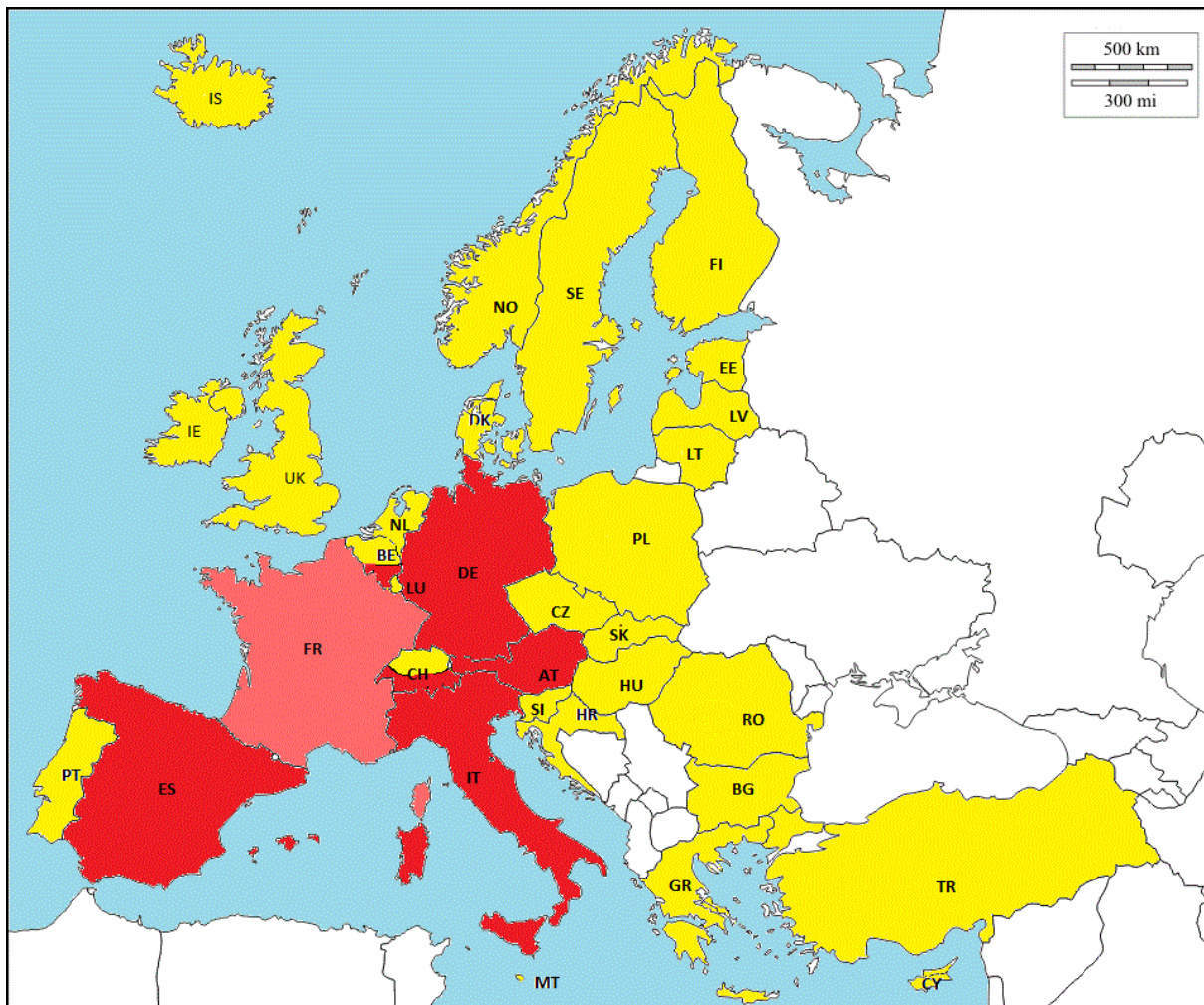
¹⁰ Source: Cinecittà Luce, Italy.

¹¹ Source: Centre national du cinéma et de l'image animée, France. Data for films released in 2009.

¹² For more detailed information, see Annex 2.

¹³ Source: Czech Ministry of Culture. The data collected concern only first commercial exploitation films.

¹⁴ Source: Croatian Audiovisual Centre.



3.2 Map of language transfer practices in television

Dubbing is the dominant practice in 11 countries: Austria, Belgium (French-speaking), Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland and Turkey.

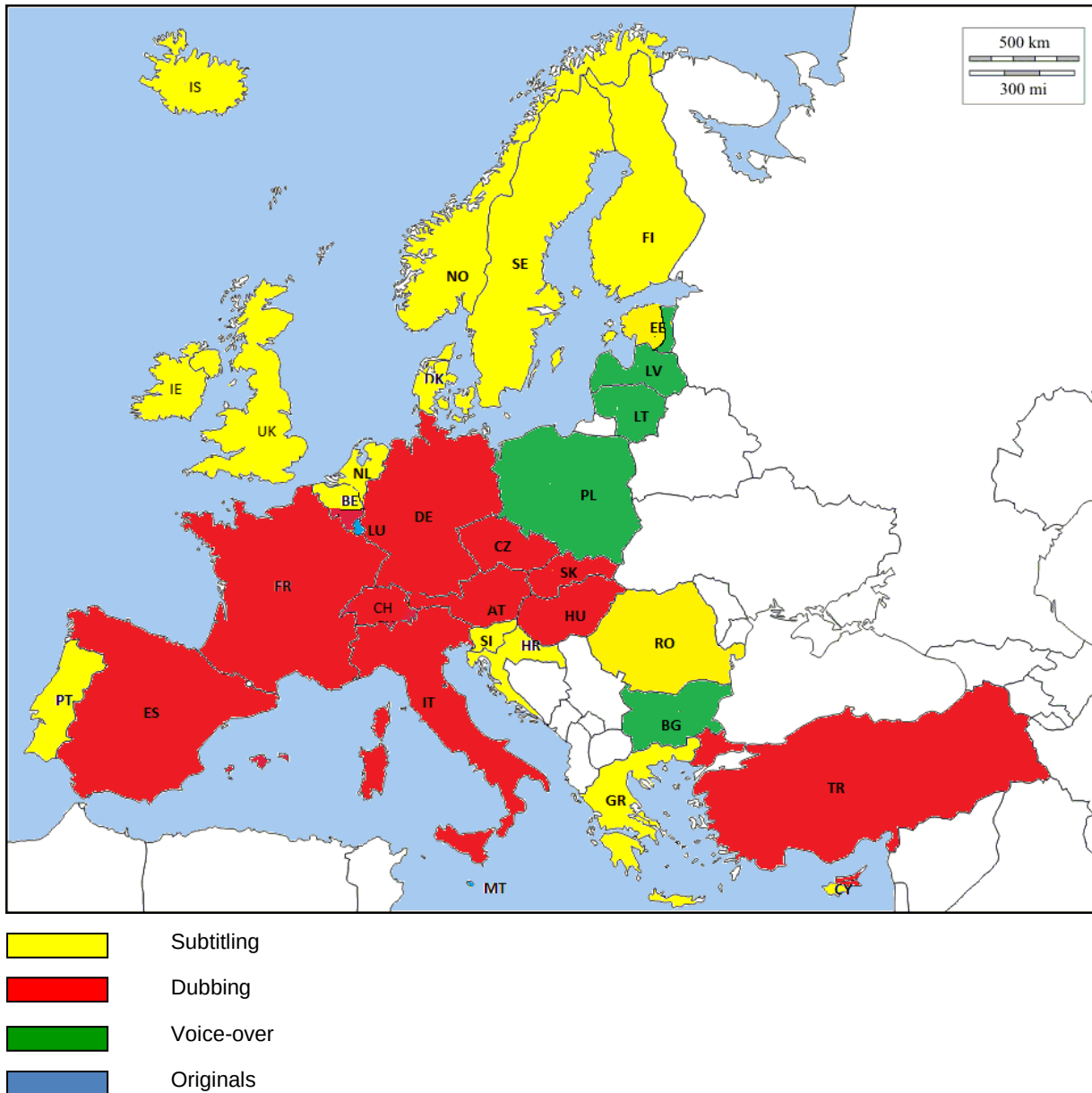
Voice-over is practiced in four countries: Bulgaria, Poland, Latvia and Lithuania. It is practiced to a lesser extent in Estonia as well, where one third of programmes are broadcast in voice-over and the remainder with subtitles.

Subtitling is practiced in the remainder of the countries: Belgium (Flemish-speaking), Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden and United Kingdom.

Luxembourg and Malta fall into a separate category. In Luxembourg, the audiovisual landscape is shared by the national group RTL and foreign broadcasters. The foreign channels broadcast in the national language of their country of origin; channels that belong to RTL group broadcast in French, German or Dutch, depending on the target public. RTL Lëtzeuerg is the only channel that broadcasts in Luxembourgish. In Malta, the language of broadcast is Maltese; foreign films

are broadcast directly in an English version (or sometimes in an Italian version on Italian channels).

Digital broadcasting is starting to change the audiovisual environment, giving TV viewers access to original versions with subtitles as alternatives to dubbed versions, or to subtitling in a language other than the main language of broadcast. This option is a possibility in a number of countries, but for now only concerns certain channels for certain programmes, due to technological and economic barriers¹⁵.



¹⁵ See Annex 2, in particular the case study on television channels.

4 The role of subtitling in informal learning contexts

4.1 Impact of language transfer practices on the population's capacity to speak and/or understand foreign languages

Foreign language skills vary from one country to the next and also sometimes from one region to the next in the same country. In Belgium, for example, English is the second language in Wallonia and Brussels (where it is mastered by 20% and 36% of the population respectively), outdistancing Flemish. By contrast, French is still the second language in Flanders, coming slightly ahead of English. German ranks third in the country's three regions. Analysis of the questionnaires shows that the different language transfer practices used in these three regions make up one of the variables that influence the capacity to speak foreign languages.

The results at European level (Europe 33) show that, in the over-25 age group, the majority of respondents speak a second language along with their mother tongue (around 53%), whereas the sub-groups of those mastering three or four languages are smaller, representing 21% and 9% respectively of those surveyed. In the 18-25 age group, the percentages change significantly: 69.5% of respondents master a second language, 39% a third language and 12% a fourth language. In the 12-18 age group, made up mostly of secondary school pupils, 66% master a second language, 17% a third language and 5% a fourth, whereas 5% speak only their mother tongue.

These figures were compared with the answers given to other questions (frequency of viewing films and audiovisual programmes in the different media; whether the viewer is accustomed to the use of subtitling; preference for either subtitling or dubbing; willingness to watch audiovisual programmes with subtitles) and analysed in relation to the audiovisual language transfer practice used in each country. A comparative analysis was also made using as the term of comparison the sample of European civil servants, whose foreign language skills are particularly high¹⁶.

The results of these analyses should be interpreted cautiously because language skills levels are self-assessed (respondents evaluated their own knowledge of languages). They suggest three main avenues to be further explored:

- There is no negative correlation between being accustomed to dubbing and knowledge of foreign languages: the populations of dubbing countries speak other languages in addition to their mother tongue. However, the populations of dubbing countries do not speak more foreign languages than those of subtitling countries in any of the three age groups surveyed.
- A correlation seems to exist between age, number of languages spoken and preference for subtitling or dubbing: the younger the respondents (aged 12-18 and 18-25) and the more languages they speak, the more pronounced is their preference for subtitling over dubbing.
- In addition, both the 12-18 and 18-25 age groups are convinced that subtitling is an effective tool for language learning, unlike the over-25 sample group, who have more doubts about the effectiveness of subtitling from the educational point of view.

¹⁶ See Annex 3.

4.2 Correlation between countries with high levels of language skills and the tradition of subtitling rather than dubbing

A 'high level of language skills' can be defined by two separate parameters:

- from a quantitative point of view, it can indicate the number of subjects whose knowledge of a second (L2) and third (L3) language is close to mother-tongue (L1) level
- from a qualitative point of view, it can indicate mastery of the language by each subject. In our survey, this mastery is assessed by each subject answering the questionnaire.

Before detailing the results of the survey, it is useful to point out that self-evaluation by respondents of their own language skills may be influenced by representations specific to each culture (for example, depending on the country, some languages have the reputation of being 'easy' while others tend to be considered 'hard to learn'. These cultural representations can come into play in a self-evaluation of language skills¹⁷.

According to the survey results, in countries with a tradition of subtitling, the majority of respondents state that their language level (particularly in English) is close to mother-tongue level, i.e. a level of 4 or 5 on a scale of 5, whereas in countries with a tradition of dubbing, the majority of respondents evaluate their level at 3 on a scale of 5.

The survey shows that five countries achieve the best results in terms of 'high language level': Denmark, Finland, Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. An average of 86.5% of the population surveyed in these countries master the second language and 41.4% the third language (i.e. 96.7% of L2 and 49.8% of L3 for the group of subjects aged 25 and over, 93.5% of L2 and 44.5% of L3 for the 18-25 group and 69.3% of L2 and 30% of L3 for the 12-18 group). Respondents state¹⁸ that their language level (particularly in English) is close to mother-tongue level, i.e. a level of 4 or 5 on a scale of 5.

In countries with a tradition of dubbing and voice-over, 73% of those surveyed said they have an L2 and 28% an L3 (i.e. 63% of the subjects aged 25 and over have L2 and 22% L3. For the 18-25 age group, 78.7% have an L2 and 46% an L3. For the 12-18 age group, 77.6% L2 and 17% L3)¹⁹. Since the margin of error is very low, this spread seems to indicate a relation between the practice of subtitling in countries and high levels of language skills.

¹⁷ See footnote in page 17.

¹⁸ In the 15 subtitling countries (Belgium (Flemish-speaking), Croatia, Cyprus (Greek-speaking), Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Iceland, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden and United Kingdom) for the over-25 age group, 74.6% of subjects stated that they have an L2, and 33% an L3. For the 18-25 age group, 80.7% said that they have an L2 and 41.2% a third language. For the 12-18 age group, the percentages are 72.5% for L2 and 22.7% for L3, or an average of 76% in this group of countries for L2 and 32.3% for L3.

¹⁹ It became apparent during the survey that many persons in the group of dubbing and voice-over countries consider that they have an L2 and an L3 but do not always have points of references for judging their language skills levels as in subtitling countries.

	L 2 / Mother tongue 12 – 18	L 2 / Mother tongue 18-25	L 2 / Mother tongue + 25
Denmark	53/58	32/46	48/48
Finland	32/50	44/44	42/44
Netherlands	46/52	45/46	52/61
Sweden	30/60	60/60	63/61
Norway	29/54	50/51	55/55

Figure 1 – Table of second language volume by age group, taking the mother tongue as the standard of comparison for the five 'top scoring' countries, by way of example

In the following tables, it is possible to compare by age group the countries whose population, according to the survey, masters the mother tongue (L1) + one foreign language (L2) and those where the population has additional language skills, i.e. a second foreign language.

The over-25 age group

The table below shows that at Europe 33 level, out of a sample of 2 277 subjects aged over 25 years, an average of 37 out of 54 subjects per country master a second language.

Over-25 age group Total responses: 2277 Average: 69					
5. What is your mother tongue? 6. Do you speak one or more other languages?					
Country	Responses				
	Mother tongue	Language 1	Language 2	Language 3	No
Austria	48	40	12	2	2
Belgium	88	59	33	6	6
Bulgaria	48	18	3	1	
Cyprus	43	21	6	1	
Czech Republic	48	27	11	2	9
Denmark	48	48	40	17	
Estonia	46	21	7	2	1
Finland	44	42	22	8	
France	86	59	18	16	23
Germany	61	50	19	11	3
Greece	48	31	19	7	
Hungary	51	24	11	2	5
Ireland	40	30	6		2
Italy	90	55	20	9	2
Latvia	47	17	11	3	
Lithuania	47	19	7	1	
Luxembourg	44	45	17	10	4
Malta	49	21	12	6	
Netherlands	61	52	14	9	5
Poland	47	21			2
Portugal	39	20	9	3	3
Romania	43	40	7	3	
Slovakia	47	26	9	2	11
Slovenia	52	31	13	7	1
Spain	88	80	26	14	12
Sweden	61	63	30	14	3
United Kingdom	71	38	14	19	21
Croatia	55	29	11	3	2
Iceland	47	40	11	9	3
Liechtenstein	51	33	11	3	
Norway	55	55	28	11	3
Switzerland	29	14	8	5	
Turkey	52	39	8	2	8
Total	1774	1208	473	208	131
Average	54	37	14	6	4

Figure 2 – Mother tongue / Foreign languages. Population over age 25

The result of 37/54, or 68.5%, represents a percentage that should give rise to a positive correlation with a tradition of subtitling. This is the situation for many countries²⁰ although there are others for which this is not yet the case. These countries, such as the United Kingdom or Portugal, are described by Eurobarometer as 'monolingual'. The majority of subjects in the

²⁰ See country-by-country analysis in Annex 5.

sample from Portugal responded in a language other than their mother tongue and via the website.

The 18-25 age group

18 - 25 age group Total responses: 1905 Average: 58					
5. What is your mother tongue? 6. Do you speak one or more other languages?					
Country	Responses				
	Mother tongue	Language 1	Language 2	Language 3	No
Austria	44	44	38	8	2
Belgium	139	129	108	38	9
Bulgaria	44	20	2		
Cyprus	47	29	7	3	
Czech Republic	48	27	17	3	
Denmark	46	32	16		
Estonia	31	27	11	4	
Finland	44	44	18		
France	56	39	24		
Germany	49	54	38	11	1
Greece	42	12	7	4	1
Hungary	46	23	11	3	
Ireland	42	40	10	3	3
Italy	60	57	38	30	
Latvia	43	23	16	6	
Lithuania	39	19	11	3	
Luxembourg	54	49	23	12	4
Malta	48	30	11	2	
Netherlands	46	45	18	3	
Poland	32	29	19	9	
Portugal	47	29	21	19	
Romania	48	18	12	8	
Slovakia	48	28	18	4	
Slovenia	51	45	23	5	2
Spain	71	70	47	10	1
Sweden	60	61	36	6	2
United Kingdom	32	31	16		
Croatia	52	40	17	3	2
Iceland	41	40	8	3	
Liechtenstein	43	24	11	2	
Norway	51	50	22	7	
Switzerland	41	37	19	11	
Turkey	80	80	47	16	
Total	1665	1325	740	236	27
Average	50	40	22	7	0,8

Figure 3 – Mother tongue / Foreign languages. Population aged 18 to 25

The figures in this table show that at Europe 33 level, in a sample made up of 1 905 subjects in the 18-25 age group, a second language is mastered by an average of 40 out of 50 subjects, i.e. an average of 80% per country, and a third language by 22/50 or 44%. The proportion of 40/50 should give rise to a positive correlation with the tradition of subtitling²¹.

²¹ See country-by-country analysis in Annex 5.

The 12-18 age group

12 - 18 age group Total responses: 1513 Average: 46					
5. What is your mother tongue? 6. Do you speak one or more other languages?					
Country	Responses				
	Mother tongue	Language 1	Language 2	Language 3	No
Austria	38	31	23	7	
Belgium	54	46	11	3	6
Bulgaria	36	21	5	1	
Cyprus	34	22	1	1	
Czech Republic	39	27	6	2	
Denmark	57	53	16	1	
Estonia	34	18	3		
Finland	32	32	21	17	
France	50	43	3		13
Germany	49	41	7	4	10
Greece	36	18	10	3	
Hungary	31	29	3	1	
Ireland	42	39	12	6	
Italy	55	47	2	2	8
Latvia	29	14	4	1	
Lithuania	27	12	3	3	
Luxembourg	52	51	17	3	
Malta	34	19	7	2	
Netherlands	50	46	34	9	
Poland	30	29	11	1	
Portugal	42	23	3	1	
Romania	42	30	14	1	
Slovakia	39	26	5	2	
Slovenia	42	33	2		5
Spain	50	44	10	5	16
Sweden	37	30	5		7
United Kingdom	37	12			4
Croatia	41	31	3	1	5
Iceland	34	27	3		
Liechtenstein	8	8			
Norway	45	29	7		8
Switzerland	50	43	3		1
Turkey	53	29	2	1	
Total	1329	1003	256	78	83
Average	40	30	8	2	2

Figure 4 – Mother tongue / Foreign languages. Population aged 12 to 18

Out of a sample of 1 513 subjects aged 12 to 18, a Europe 33 average of 75% of the subjects stated that they have a second language (learning it at school).

These data on mastery of the second and third language can also be cross-linked with the respondents' perception of the usefulness of subtitling in language learning. Asked 'Do you think that subtitling can improve your knowledge of foreign languages?', the population of dubbing countries replied that subtitling cannot improve their knowledge of foreign languages²².

²² The 12-18 age group: 22% replied 'yes', 10% 'maybe', 8% 'no' and 4% 'I don't know'. The 18-25 age group: 34% replied 'yes', 10% 'maybe', 3% 'no' and 3% 'I don't know'. The over-25 age group: 33% replied 'yes', 11% 'maybe', 5% 'no' and 4% 'I don't know'.

5 The role of subtitling in formal learning contexts

5.1 The educational impact of spoken and written language on the screen on language learning

Certain uses of subtitling can contribute to foreign language learning or create motivation to learn languages. It is essential to make a distinction between *learning* and *motivation to learn* and to bear in mind that learning is a process that occurs in a complex context in which subtitling is only *one* of many factors at work.

The literature in this area states that subtitling can contribute to language learning, to a greater or lesser degree of effectiveness, depending on different variables²³:

- being accustomed to subtitling (students accustomed to subtitling develop learning strategies more quickly than those accustomed to dubbing)
- the learner's level (depending on the learner's level, either intralinguistic or interlinguistic subtitling will be more appropriate)
- the objectives of the teaching (intralinguistic subtitling is better suited to learning grammar and spelling if the learner is not a beginner, whereas interlinguistic subtitling is more useful for building vocabulary)
- proximity between languages (learning through subtitling seems to be more effective for languages whose written form is identical to that of the learner's mother tongue. There are not many studies on this subject and this variable is mentioned for the record).

The results of the case study carried out in the context of the study on young people aged 25 to 35 confirm the role of subtitling and offer a theme for further reflection, as concerns the content of the subtitled audiovisual programme²⁴. For the role of subtitling to be effective, there must be a semantic correspondence between the pictures and the verbal message, even if this can give

²³ See F. Bianchi, T. Ciabattini, 'Captions and Subtitles in EFL Learning: an investigative study in a comprehensive computer environment' www.openstarts.units.it/dspace/bitstream/10077/2848/1/bianchi_ciabattini.pdf, 2008; M. Danan, 'Captioning and Subtitling: Undervalued Language Learning Strategies', *Translators' Journal*, Vol. 49, No 1, 2004, www.erudit.org/revue/meta/2004/v49/n1/009021ar.pdf; G. D'Ydevalle, 'Foreign-Language Acquisition by Watching Subtitled Television Programs', www.kansaiu.ac.jp/fl/publication/pdf_education/04/4geryd%27ydewalle.pdf, 2002; R.C. Gardner, P.D. MacIntyre, 'An instrumental motivation in language study: Who says it isn't effective?' *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 13, 1991, pp. 266-272; R.C. Gardner, P.D. MacIntyre, 'A student's contributions to second language acquisition. Part 1: Cognitive variables', *Language Teaching*, 25, 1992, pp.211-220; R.C. Gardner, P.D. MacIntyre, 'A student's contribution to second language acquisition. Part II: Affective variables', *Language Teaching*, 26, 1993a, pp.1-11; R.C. Gardner, P.D. MacIntyre, 'On the measurement of affective variables in second language learning', *Language Learning*, 43, 1993b, pp.157-194; P. Markham, 'The effects of captioned television videotapes on the listening comprehension of beginning, intermediate, and advanced ESL students', *Educational Technology*, 1989; C. Montgomery, 'L'anxiété et la perception de la compétence langagière chez les étudiants anglophones, francophones et mixtes en milieu minoritaire francophone' ('Anxiety and the perception of language skills in English, French and mixed speakers in a French-speaking minority'); Kao, Pei-Lun, 'The Impact of multimedia environments on self-confidence of low-achievers with foreign language anxiety', http://research.ncl.ac.uk/ARECLS/vol3_documents/peilunkao.pdf

²⁴ See Annex 4 for a detailed description of the case study.

rise to comprehension problems, particularly among learners not accustomed to the technique of subtitling. When the picture serves as the vehicle for part of the information that contributes to getting the message across (figures, names of places or persons written in the picture, etc.), comprehension problems can emerge.

It is essential to work with audiovisual documents suited to the learner's level, not only to ensure that they are effective but also to keep from discouraging learners and undermining their motivation to learn.

The results of the case study on the role of subtitling in the integration of migrants, presented in the following box, also offer interesting suggestions, although the specific features of this case study do not allow its results to be generalised at European level.

Impact of subtitling on the integration of immigrants. A case study²⁵

A second case study was carried out in Belgium on three samples of immigrants, who were shown an audiovisual sequence in the original language with interlinguistic subtitles (first group), intralinguistic subtitles (second group) or the original without subtitles (control group).

The answers of the French-speaking and Dutch-speaking immigrant subjects show that interlinguistic subtitling does not necessarily contribute to the enhanced social and professional fulfilment sought by citizens with an immigrant background. The subjects find that they are handicapped because they do not yet master the language of the host country in which the subtitling is proposed.

The results of the intralinguistic subtitling are superior. This could be due to the fact that the subjects receive the message in both oral and written form. The written form is thought to play the role of reinforcing and confirming comprehension of the idea first received orally and thus to constitute an aid to comprehension.

These results suggest areas of action for training schemes for immigrants. In an initial phase, intralinguistic subtitling could be used to learn the language of the host country/region. In a second phase, interlinguistic subtitling could be used to learn the country's second language (in the case of Belgium, Dutch source language with subtitles in French for the French-speaking regions; and vice-versa, French source language with subtitles in Dutch for Flanders).

Subtitling therefore presents potential for learning the language of the host country, but different criteria must be respected when developing the educational tool.

Other case studies could be undertaken, either by adding a fourth sample with reverse subtitling or exploring other communities of immigrants in other European countries. This study had to be limited to a single experience.

²⁵ For further details, see Annex 4.

The use of subtitling as an educational tool in learning or improving mastery of languages is also reinforced by the results of the questionnaire-based survey, which demonstrates the European population's confidence in the educational potential of subtitling²⁶.

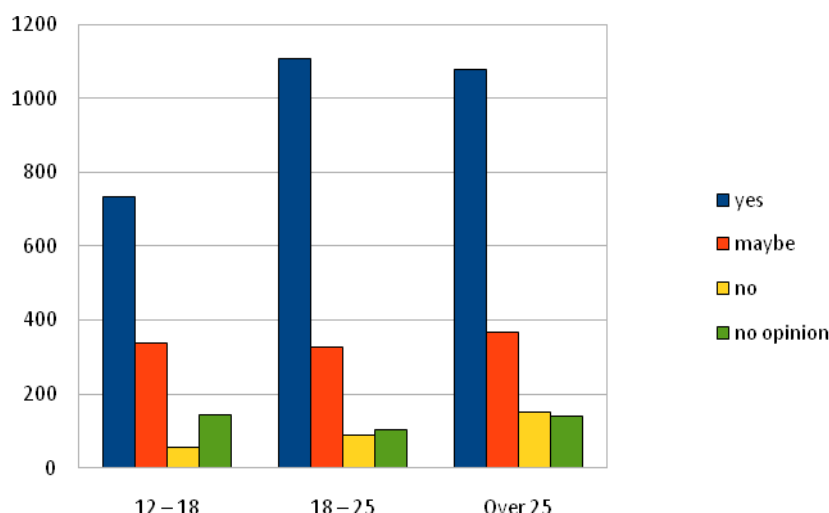


Figure 5 – The age groups: Do you think that subtitling can improve your knowledge of foreign languages?

The persons surveyed also expressed their willingness to watch films in the original language with subtitles if these were broadcast by television channels²⁷.

The availability of such programmes can constitute a favourable environment for the use of subtitling as an educational tool for language learning²⁸.

5.2 Knowledge of foreign languages and preference for dubbing or subtitling

5.2.1 General results

The majority of European students surveyed (5 172 persons)²⁹ prefer to watch films in a foreign language they know in the original version, without subtitles (30%) or with subtitles (49%), while only 21% of this population opts for the dubbed version. The students who choose the original version (with or without subtitling) state that they wish to see films in their semiological integrity, i.e. as conceived by the director, or else to practice the foreign languages they know. Some nevertheless say this choice is due to habit. Students who prefer dubbing are motivated by habit, together with the wish to avoid making the effort required to read subtitles.

²⁶ 68.7% of survey respondents said that subtitling can improve knowledge of foreign languages. See Annex 4.

²⁷ 71.8% of respondents. See Annex 4.

²⁸ See Conclusions below.

²⁹ 5 172 students surveyed, including 3 122 from language faculties and 1 850 from non-language faculties. The total also includes 117 students whose mother tongue is different from that of the community where they live and 83 bilingual students. The latter two categories were analysed separately. See Annex 4.

Preference for the original version remains very pronounced even when the language of the film is not known, but the proportions change: 67% of those surveyed prefer the original version with subtitles compared with 33% who prefer the dubbed version.

These data take on particular significance when compared with respondents' habits before they begin university (see table a).

	Film in a known foreign language			Film in unknown language	
	Original	Subtitling	Dubbing	Subtitling	Dubbing
Today	30%	49%	21%	67%	33%
Before university	6%	52%	42%	56%	44%

Table a. Audiovisual habits today and before beginning university

5.2.2 Results grouped by faculties

The 3 122 European students enrolled in language faculties who completed the questionnaire prefer by far the original version of a film in a *known foreign language*, without (42%) or with (44.5%) subtitles. Only 13.5% of all the students from these faculties prefer dubbing, mainly because they are accustomed to this technique. If the film is in an *unknown language*, 75% of the respondents still prefer the original version (with subtitles), especially to be able to appreciate the film as it has been conceived by the director. The remaining 25% prefer dubbing.

Europe 33	Students	OVL	STL	DL	STnL	DnL
LANG	3 122	42%	44,5%	13,5%	75%	25%

Table b. Preferences of students in language faculties

Key: LANG = language faculty, nLANG = non-language faculty, OVL = original version without subtitles of a film in a known foreign language, STL = original version with subtitles of a film in a known foreign language, DL = dubbed version of a film in a known foreign language, STnL = original version with subtitles of a film in an unknown language, DnL = dubbed version of a film in an unknown foreign language.

Even the 1 850 students in non-language faculties mostly prefer the original version of a film in a *known foreign language* without (10%) or with (57%) subtitles, whereas 33% prefer dubbing. If the film is in an *unknown language*, the number of those preferring the original version with subtitles decreases more than among students from language faculties, dropping to 55%. The remaining 45% of this population prefer dubbing.

Europe 33	Students	OVL	STL	DL	STnL	DnL
nLANG	1 850	10%	57%	33%	55%	45%

Table c. Preferences of students in non-language faculties

Key: LANG = language faculty, nLANG = non-language faculty, OVL = original version without subtitles of a film in a known foreign language, STL = original version with subtitles of a film in a known foreign language, DL = dubbed version of a film in a known foreign language, STnL = original version with subtitles of a film in an unknown language, DnL = dubbed version of a film in an unknown foreign language.

As to the number of foreign languages spoken, students in European language faculties speak an average of 2.7 languages compared with 2.2 languages before beginning university. Students in non-language faculties present a similar trend: the number of foreign languages spoken increases with university attendance, from 1.8 foreign languages before beginning university to

2.25 at present. The languages studied most are English, French, Spanish, Italian, German and Russian.

Concerning the media on which films are viewed, those surveyed seem to prefer TV (91%). The second most widely used medium is DVD (66%), followed by cinema (60%) and internet (57%).

These data are particularly interesting compared with those on the preferences of these same respondents before beginning university. What stands out in particular is that the tendency to prefer the original version of a film in a known foreign language is much more pronounced among students in language faculties than among those in non-language faculties.

The preference for a dubbed film in a known foreign language shows a pronounced change among language-faculty students, dropping from 42% (before university) to 13.5% (today); for students from non-language faculties, the change is a bit less prominent (from 42% to 33%).

If the film is in an unknown foreign language, students from non-language faculties keep their habits, whereas there is a more visible change among students from language faculties, who show a clearer preference for subtitling once they have begun university.

Faculty	Time	Film in known foreign language			Film in unknown language	
		OV	Subtitled	Dubbed	Subtitled	Dubbed
Language	Today	42%	44.5%	13.5%	75%	25%
	Before univ.	9%	49%	42%	58%	42%
Non-language	Today	10%	57%	33%	54.5%	45.5%
	Before univ.	1.5%	56.5%	42%	53.5%	46.5%

Table d. Audiovisual habits today and before beginning university, by faculty

5.2.3 Results grouped by audiovisual tradition

This section compares language transfer preferences and language skills of students from dubbing countries, subtitling countries and voice-over countries. As a methodological precaution, it should be pointed out that, since language transfer practices can vary within the same country, groups were set up based on the practices adopted for television.

Dubbing countries (Austria, Belgium (French-speaking), Cyprus (Turkish-speaking), Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland and Turkey).

Of the 1 515 students in language faculties from these countries, the preference for the original version of a film in a known foreign language, without (36.5%) or with (48.5%) subtitles, is impressive compared with the percentage of students who prefer dubbing (15%).

Dubbing country	Students	OVL	STL	DL	STnL	DnL
LANG	1 515	36.5%	48.5%	15%	65%	35%

Table e. Results grouped by country, audiovisual policy and faculty – dubbing countries, language faculties

Even if the film is in an unknown language, despite the audiovisual tradition in their country, students in language faculties from dubbing countries still prefer subtitling (65%) to dubbing (35%). The reasons given by those who prefer the original version with or without subtitling are primarily related to semiology and foreign language learning, while the others prefer dubbing for reasons of simplicity of understanding or out of habit.

The data are significantly different in the case of the 880 students in non-language faculties. If the film is in a known foreign language, nearly half of those who responded to the questionnaire prefer the original version, without (3%) or with (46%) subtitles. The other half prefer dubbing (51%). If the film is in an unknown foreign language, the preference for dubbing is obvious, with

73% of respondents preferring it to subtitling (27%). The reasons are the same as those given by students in language faculties.

Dubbing country	Students	OVL	STL	DL	STnL	DnL
nLANG	880	3%	46%	51%	27%	73%

Table f. Results grouped by country, audiovisual policy and faculty – dubbing countries, non-language faculties

Subtitling countries (Belgium (Flemish-speaking), Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden and United Kingdom).

Most of 1 253 students in language faculties in these countries prefer the original version of a film in a known foreign language, without (50%) or with (42%) subtitles, to its dubbed version (8%). If the film is in an unknown language, the preferences change slightly, with 88% preferring subtitles and 12% the dubbed version. The reasons given by those preferring subtitling are essentially semiology and language learning, but also habit. Those who prefer dubbing said this technique makes it easier to concentrate on the images.

Subtitling countries	Students	OVL	STL	DL	STnL	DnL
LANG	1 253	50%	42%	8%	88%	12%

Tableau g. Results grouped by country, audiovisual policy and faculty – subtitling countries, language faculties

The 882 students in non-language faculties also prefer the original version of a film in a known foreign language, without (17%) or with (70%) subtitles, to the dubbed version (13%). Even if the film is in an unknown language, the preference remains strong for subtitling (84% vs 16%). The reasons for these choices are the same as those given by the students from language faculties.

Subtitling country	Students	OVL	STL	DL	STnL	DnL
nLANG	882	17%	70%	13%	84%	16%

Table h. Results grouped by country, audiovisual policy and faculty – subtitling countries, non-language faculties

Voice-over countries (Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland)

Most of the 354 students in language faculties prefer the original version of a film in a known foreign language, without (36%) or with (36%) subtitles, whereas 28% prefer the dubbed version. The proportions change very little when the film is in an unknown foreign language, with 71% preferring subtitles and 29% the dubbed version. In contrast with the responses by students from subtitling countries, habit counts for little here: the reasons given by students for choosing the original over the dubbed version are semiology and language learning.

Voice-over countries	Students	OVL	STL	DL	STnL	DnL
LANG	354	36%	36%	28%	71%	29%

Table i. Results grouped by country, audiovisual policy and faculty – voice-over countries, language faculties

For the 88 students in non-language faculties, the data show a preference for dubbing. If the film is in a known foreign language, none of these students prefers to view the film in the original without subtitles, less than half (44%) prefer the subtitled original version and the majority prefer the dubbed version (56%). As with students from dubbing and subtitling countries, students in non-language faculties tend to be more conservative and audiovisual habits count more in their preferences, especially for films in an unknown foreign language.

Voice-over countries	Students	OVL	STL	DL	STnL	DnL
nLANG	88	0%	44%	56%	36%	64%

Table j. Results grouped by country, audiovisual policy and faculty – voice-over countries, non-language faculties

5.2.4 Before university – during university

A comparison of these data with those concerning the pre-university period brings to light two types of changes that do not emerge clearly from the preceding analysis. First, there is a pronounced shift towards preference for the original, whether subtitled or not, among students from dubbing countries. Their numbers rise from 19% to 72% for a film in a known foreign language and from 13% to 51% in the case of a film in an unknown language.

The second major movement concerns the shift from preference for the subtitled version to preference for the original without subtitles of a film in a known foreign language, among students in subtitling countries. Before beginning university, the majority of these students prefer subtitling for a film in a known foreign language (82%), while only 9% preferred the original of the same film. Once in university, the percentage of students preferring subtitling drops to 54%, whereas those who prefer the original grows fourfold (36.5%).

It is interesting to note that the figures concerning films in an unknown language remained relatively stable, as did those concerning the preference for dubbing. There is nevertheless in subtitling countries a slight increase in the number of those who prefer dubbing for a film in a known foreign language and a larger increase (but quantitatively non-influential) for a film in an unknown language.

In voice-over countries, a dual decline in preferences for subtitling is observed for films in a known foreign language: preferences shift to the original without subtitles (as in the subtitling countries) on the one hand, and to the dubbed version (as in dubbing countries).

The relationship between knowledge of foreign languages and preference for subtitling is striking. This does not necessarily mean that those who prefer a film in the original language, subtitled or not, end up speaking more foreign languages, because too many factors are involved in the learning process. This relationship explains instead the obvious reverse finding that emerges clearly from the study: those with greater sensitivity to languages prefer to view a film in its original version in order to better appreciate the audiovisual work in its semiological integrity, with habit playing a significantly marginal and secondary role.

6 Barriers to the use of subtitling

Background

In the 33 European countries studied, the audiovisual translation methods used most widely are dubbing, subtitling and voice-over. The historical reasons for these choices are political, economic, social and cultural³⁰ and they have had different impacts depending on the country. In general, the audiovisual practice adopted for cinema was subsequently adopted for television, although over time the two evolved independently one from another.

From the economic point of view, the volume of demand was the basis of the choice by Germany, Spain, France and Italy at the time of the shift from silent films to talking films. Since these countries' markets constituted a potentially large volume of admissions, the use of a costly technique like dubbing could be amortised by the popularity of the films³¹.

Another factor that led to the adoption of dubbing in these countries was the language and cultural policy of the 1930s essential to their nationalism and the standardisation of their language. In the three countries with nationalist regimes (Italy, Spain and Germany), this policy, building simultaneously on means such as censorship and quotas on imports of foreign films³², encouraged national unity, but propaganda as well. Policy in this area nevertheless varied and slackened off at times, especially in Spain³³. Yet nationalist regimes cannot systematically be associated with the imposition of dubbing, as evidenced by the case of Portugal, a subtitling country. In France, moreover, the defence and promotion of linguistic unity dates back to a historic process of political and cultural centralisation that started in the 16th century.

Dubbing was also adopted by small countries or regions that speak the national language of larger neighbouring countries that used dubbing: this is the case of Austria, for example, and Wallonia (Belgium). The significant level of illiteracy at the time, which made subtitling less practical and accessible to the population, was another contributing factor.

Censorship, language protectionism and illiteracy were also at the root of the choice of voice-over, essentially in countries under the influence of the Soviet Union. In these countries, where the import of audiovisual products from capitalist countries was more or less banned to the population as a whole, the use of voice-over allowed access to these films at accessible cost in intellectually higher and quantitatively smaller contexts.

For the countries that chose subtitling, the historical background is the same but the reasons are the opposite of those that led to the choice of dubbing, namely: the absence of a nationalist language policy; the absence of censorship of capitalist audiovisual products or foreign languages; small cinema markets; and higher literacy, though the latter factor varied depending on the country.

The United Kingdom has a different history: the fact that this country shares the language of the United States created a situation where foreign language films were considerably scarcer than those in English. In the early 1930s, these foreign language films, mostly European, were treated as exceptional products compared with Hollywood films. Rarely released in mainstream circuits, they quickly became associated with the idea of an artistic cinema targeting an educated, middle-class population. This dichotomy was developed and sustained by film clubs,

³⁰ See Martine Danan, 'Dubbing as an Expression of Nationalism', *Meta: journal des traducteurs/Meta: Translators' Journal*, Vol. 36, No 4, 1991, pp. 606-614, <http://id.erudit.org/iderudit/002446ar>

³¹ V. De Grazia, (1989) 'Mass Culture and Sovereignty: The American Challenge to European Cinemas, 1920-1960', *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 61, No 1, pp. 53-87, The University of Chicago Press.

³² Chris Rundle, K. Sturge (Eds), *Translation Under Fascism*, 2010, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.

³³ Gutiérrez Lanza, Camino (1999) 'El poder del doblaje censurado en la España franquista: Esmeralda la Zíngara o El Jorobado de Nuestra Señora de París', *Actas I. VI Simposio Internacional de Comunicación Social*, Centro de Lingüística Aplicada, Santiago de Cuba, pp. 222-228.

magazines for cinema enthusiasts and arthouse cinemas. Even today, foreign language films account for a very small share of the cinema market in the United Kingdom.

Cultural barriers

Existing studies and surveys show that, in all the countries, viewers like the audiovisual translation technique to which they are most accustomed³⁴. The preference for dubbing, subtitling or voice-over depends on the tradition established in the country. However, the population of each country does not constitute a uniform whole. Differences of appreciation of language transfer practices can be identified between inhabitants of large cities and those living in smaller cities, between students and people who have not attended university, and between persons who speak one or more foreign languages and those who speak only their mother tongue.

In countries where subtitling and dubbing practices exist side-by-side for box office releases, the subtitled versions, which respond to the needs of a specific public (multilingual and/or cinema enthusiasts) are primarily released in large cities whereas cinemas in smaller cities choose dubbed versions. The survey of university students also shows that this category has different preferences than those of other categories of their fellow citizens³⁵.

In a cultural perspective, the question of genres also has to be addressed. Overall, in all the countries, two genres are the exception to the dominant audiovisual translation mode: documentaries and animation. For documentaries, several techniques can be used: voice-over, subtitling or a mixed technique involving both. Animations and children's programmes are screened in dubbed versions, in cinemas and on television, in almost all European countries in order to give pre-school children access to audiovisual works made specifically for this age group.

Physiological and psychological barriers

The understanding of subtitles requires a number of pre-requisites³⁶, such as the ability to read and specific competences related to the speed at which subtitles change on the screen³⁷. If these pre-requisites are not met, the use of subtitling can be a barrier to understanding a film for certain categories of viewers like children, the elderly, immigrants who do not master the language of the host country and hearing-impaired or sight-impaired persons³⁸. On the other hand, in formal learning contexts, subtitling can reduce the anxiety experienced by foreign language learners.

³⁴ For an overview, see Yves Gambier, 'Orientations de la recherche en traduction audiovisuelle', *Target* No 18 (2), 2006, pp. 261-293; Jan Baetens, Atom Egoyan and Ian Balfour (Eds), *Subtitles. On the foreignness of film*, Montreal: Alphabetic City and Cambridge, Mass., and London, Engl.: MIT, 2004.

³⁵ See section 5.2 above.

³⁶ See Yves Gambier, 'Sous-titrage et apprentissage des langues', *Linguistica antverpiensia*, Vol. 6, 2007; G ry d'Ydewalle and I. Gielen, 'Attention allocation with overlapping sound, image and text', K. Rayner (Ed.), *'Eye movements and visual cognition: Scene perception and reading'*, New York, Springer Verlag, pp. 415-427; Espen Seip Blystad, Arnt Maaso (Eds), *'The invisible Text - Subtitling on Norwegian Television'*, Report by IMK Services, Department of Media and Communication, University of Oslo, March 2004.

³⁷ Henrik Gottlieb, 'Tekstning et polysemiotisk puslespil', s. i Frandsen, Finn (Ed.), *Medierne og sproget*, Aalborg, Aalborg University Press; Arnt Maas , 'Se-hva-som-skjer!': *En studie av lyd som kommunikativt virkemiddel i TV*, Oslo, Faculty of Humanities, University of Oslo, Unipub, 2002.

³⁸ See G. d'Ydewalle and M. Van de Poel (Eds), 'Incidental Foreign-Language Acquisition by Watching Subtitled Television Programs', *Journal of psycholinguistic research*, Springer, Vol. 28 No 2, 1999; Joselia Neves, *'Audiovisual Translation: Subtitling for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing'*, PhD; School of Arts, Roehampton University, 2005.

Economic barriers

Language transfer techniques are chosen primarily on the basis of cultural traditions. In fact, a choice is not really made, except in countries where several practices co-exist. In this case, professionals (distributors or broadcasters) decide which language version to use, particularly for fiction films³⁹.

For box office release, two cases can be identified: either the distributor chooses between dubbing and subtitling, or the film is distributed in both dubbed and subtitled prints⁴⁰. In the first case, the choice is made in terms of the film's commercial potential. If the film is likely to draw only a small specialised public, the distributor will choose subtitling as a way of limiting release costs. For television broadcasting, in countries where dubbing and subtitling co-exist, time slots and their associated programme genres come into play in determining the language version. Time slots where public attention is considered more unstable (12:00-13:00 and access prime time of 18:30-20:00) are less suited to subtitling, which requires viewers' continuous attention. With changes in the television landscape resulting from the shift to digital technology, it is now possible to give viewers several language versions. However, multilingual versions are not yet fully exploited because of technological barriers (see below)⁴¹.

Technological barriers⁴²

In television broadcasting, there are a number of barriers to the effective use of subtitling: different standards for set-top boxes; image format used (4/3, 16/9), which has an influence on the position of subtitles; and problems with the conversion of codes (colours, font and size of subtitles) at the time of transmission to decoders.

Technological barriers also come into play for the use of the same subtitled version of a work for different media (cinema, television, DVD, video-on-demand, mobile phones). Screens have different sizes and these media present specific characteristics that make it difficult to use subtitles already prepared for one type of media on all the others.

Legislative measures

In the framework of the study on barriers to the use of subtitling, research was carried out to check whether there are any legislative constraints hindering this translation technique.

Many countries have a language policy that contains an audiovisual component providing for the translation of TV programmes into the national language, while allowing certain exceptions (original version for educational purposes, specific characteristics of the channel, foreign channels). However, it is important to note that such legislation, generally public broadcasting laws which aim to defend and promote the national language in each country, do not influence the choice of translation technique⁴³. The European Audiovisual Media Services Directive does not lay down any requirements in this respect either.

³⁹ See MCG/Peacefulfish, *'Etude des besoins et pratiques de l'industrie audiovisuelle européenne en matière de doublage et de sous-titrage'* ('Study of the dubbing and subtitling needs and practices of the European audiovisual industry'), European Commission, 2007.

⁴⁰ See cinema map of Europe.

⁴¹ See case study on television channels, Annex 2.

⁴² For this section, see MCG/Peacefulfish.

⁴³ For further information and for specific references to national legislation, see Annex 2.

7 Conclusions

The results that emerge from analysis of the different themes of the study demonstrate the complexity of the correlation between subtitling and knowledge of languages.

- There is no negative correlation between being accustomed to dubbing and knowledge of foreign languages: the inhabitants of dubbing countries speak other languages in addition to their mother tongue. However, the inhabitants of dubbing countries do not speak more foreign languages than those of subtitling countries in any of the age groups studied in the survey.
- In countries that have a tradition of subtitling, the majority of survey respondents stated that their language level (particularly in English) is close to that of their mother tongue, i.e. level 4 or 5 on a scale of 5, whereas in the countries with a dubbing tradition, the majority of respondents said they did not exceed level 3 on a scale of 5.
- A correlation seems to emerge with regard to age, number of languages spoken and preference for subtitling or dubbing: younger respondents (aged 12 to 18 and 18 to 25) who speak more languages showed a more pronounced preference for subtitling rather than dubbing.
- The correlation between knowledge of languages and a preference for subtitling is also confirmed for students: once they have begun university, most young Europeans change their audiovisual habits and prefer subtitling to dubbing, for reasons of semiology and language learning.
- The only exception in this category is students from non-language faculties in dubbing and voice-over countries, who still seem to prefer dubbing to subtitling, out of habit and to avoid having to make the effort to read subtitles
- Subtitling, especially the use of intralinguistic subtitles, can make it easier for migrants to learn the language of their host country.
- The European population is confident on the whole in the educational potential of subtitling (nearly 72% of respondents, and in particular the population aged 12 to 25) and also expresses willingness to view films in the original with subtitles if this choice is offered by television channels.

Three main conclusions may be drawn from these results (to be taken with the precautions mentioned throughout the analysis):

- subtitling helps to improve the mastery of foreign languages (see chapter 4)
- subtitling can raise awareness and provide motivation for language learning, in both formal and informal contexts, and consequently contributes to creating an environment that encourages multilingualism (see chapter 5.1)
- knowledge of foreign languages and university studies encourage citizens to choose subtitling rather than dubbing (see chapter 5.2 of the report).

It is nevertheless important to clarify that in informal learning contexts, the number of languages to which viewers' awareness can be raised through subtitling depends on the origin of the films in circulation. Today, in the near majority of European countries, box office releases are dominated by North American productions in English, so viewers in subtitling countries are likely to be most familiar with English.

The fact remains, however, that certain groups of the European population (students in language faculties, cinema enthusiasts, etc.) make a point of seeking out the original subtitled version of films in the different languages in which they wish to improve their skills.

8 Recommendations

The European Commission wishes to obtain proposals for actions that could be organised at European Union level to support subtitling and promote multilingualism through the media.

The recommendations made in this section draw on the study's results and conclusions while taking into account the barriers, particularly economic, mentioned in chapter 6.

8.1 Strategic recommendation: Enhanced dialogue with all stakeholders

Timeframe: short term

Operational suggestion:

Organise a public hearing or a conference in Brussels to initiate a dialogue with interested stakeholders, selected in advance, in order to consider actions to increase the use of subtitling in both the media and formal educational contexts.

Objective: This dialogue should entail a discussion of the barriers that prevent or hinder the use of subtitling (economic, technological, cultural, etc. barriers). This process should also address the situation of the languages of countries whose audiovisual production has greater difficulty circulating in the media. The conditions for making existing subtitled versions available (in a given language and for a given media) should also be studied.

Participants: The debate should bring together teachers, researchers and media professionals (distributors, cinema operators, broadcasters, operators of video-on-demand platforms and audiovisual translators).

Organiser: European Commission – Unit for Multilingual Policy

Interlocutors: European Commission – Unit for MEDIA Programme and Media Literacy, Member States

8.2 Strategic recommendation: Study of best practice

Timeframe: medium term

Operational suggestion:

Carry out a study of existing best practice in the use of subtitling as an educational tool.

Objective: The research spectrum should be broad and should include not only experiences carried out in schools and universities (such as the Learning via Subtitling project coordinated by Hellenic Open University in Greece and subsidised by the European Union⁴⁴ or experiences conducted in other European universities and research centres), but also actions by broadcasters (educational programmes of TV channels, such as 'Apprendre et enseigner avec TV5 monde').

Organisers/Initiators: European Commission – Unit for Multilingual Policy and Unit for Lifelong Learning

⁴⁴ <http://levis.cti.gr/>

8.3 Strategic recommendation: Creation of and awareness raising in networks of educators

Timeframe: medium term

Operational suggestion 1:

Encourage the creation of networks of language teachers and professors at European level to pool best practice for different uses of subtitling in the field of language teaching at both secondary and university level (and for universities, not only in language faculties but in all the others as well).

Objectives: These networks could also be charged with promoting subtitling among schools, universities, associations and any other organisations active in the field of education and/or media literacy (e.g. cultural institutes in different countries, such as the Alliance française for France or the British Council for the United Kingdom).

Organisers/Initiators: European Commission – Unit for Multilingual Policy, Unit for Lifelong Learning

Interlocutors: Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)

Timeframe: medium term

Operational suggestion 2:

Develop subtitling as an educational tool.

Objective: Promote use of this tool, given its capacity to *create awareness* of language and cultural diversity, to *provide motivation* for language learning (foreign languages or the language of the host country for immigrants) and to *improve* language skills for languages already studied. The use of foreign language learning methods based on the creation of subtitles by students and pupils should be encouraged. This method has demonstrated its effectiveness in past experiences (see best practice mentioned in section 8.2 and in particular Learning via Subtitling, a project coordinated by Hellenic Open University in Greece). Subtitling could thus help to strengthen multilingualism and multiculturalism in Europe.

Organisers/Initiators: the networks of language teachers set up in the framework of operational suggestion 1

Interlocutors: European Commission– Unit for Multilingualism Policy and Lifelong Learning Unit

8.4 Strategic recommendation: Involve media professionals

Timeframe: medium term

Operational suggestion:

Encourage media professionals to develop and/or make available quality European films in subtitled versions, to be broadcast in time slots (television) or at screenings (cinema) accessible to the targeted public. This range of subtitled films could be presented in the form of a festival, for example a 'Best of European Cinema' festival. To promote language diversity and

multilingualism, these films should preferably be chosen from among productions from countries with linguistic areas of limited scope (see Conclusions).

Objectives: To encourage broadcasters, distributors, operators and video-on-demand publishers to disseminate audiovisual works, and in particular European cinema masterpieces (heritage films and contemporary films), in subtitled versions.

The motivation of viewers, especially the young and very young (aged 12 to 25), to watch subtitled films and audiovisual programmes is bridled by a limited and not always available offer in countries where dubbing and voice-over are the dominant practices in the media. Even where such films are available, they are primarily works in English.

The potential of digital dissemination technologies (digital terrestrial television but also web television) should also be taken into account for offering different language versions of the same programme (e.g. original language, dubbed and subtitled versions; or original with interlinguistic and intralinguistic subtitled versions; etc.)

Organisers/initiators: European Commission – Unit for MEDIA Programme and Media Literacy

Interlocutors: Member States, associations of public and private television channels (European Broadcasting Union and Association of Commercial Television).