**Audiovisual Translation Modes**

**A**udio**V**isual **T**ranslation: opposite to common assumption, it is not only about films (this is the domain of film or screen translation), but also about TV, computer games, video games, videoclips and even theatre plays - everything that is **multimodal** and includes more than one mode of reception, for example, not only the visual one, but also the aural one.

**Subtitling:** It is a mode which consists of a text (one or two lines) appearing at the bottom of the screen, simultaneously to characters' utterances. As the name suggests, subtitles appear at the bottom, but it is possible to encounter them in the middle or even at the top of the screen. It happens only if the frame makes it impossible for the subtitles to appear in their usual position. A different kind of subtitling is [subtitling](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surtitles), also known as supertitling. It is used in theatre and opera to help the audience understand a foreign-language play.

**Technical rules and guidelines for subtitlers**

1. **Legibility** - the subtitles have to be legible and easily seen on the screen. They have to fit on the screen within 1-2 lines of text and be displayed long enough for the viewer to understand them.

It means that the subtitler either has to work with ready-made time frames (and is responsible only for the linguistic part) or they have to synchronise the subtitles with dialogues themselves Legibility is also about the size of subtitles: they have to be big enough to be read easily, and their font must be easy to read - preferably sans serif.

The text should have no more than 36-38 characters per line, including spaces and punctuation marks. That is why subtitles always seem short to viewers: subtitlers sometimes have to sacrifice information for increased clarity and the appropriate number of characters in a line. It is estimated that about 30%-40% of the original is lost during the process of translation.

2. **Comprehensibility** - form of the subtitles has to be easy to grasp and make reading easy. This criterion overlaps with the previous one - it is concerned with optimal division of text into lines and making it understandable - sometimes it can influence our understanding of the whole film.

3. **Discreetness** - subtitles have to obstruct the view as little as possible. As their name suggests, subtitles should be placed at the bottom of the screen (they appear in the middle or at the top of the screen very rarely). They are usually white, sometimes yellow is used - to indicate a song in background or an utterance in the third language.

4. **Naturalness** - our translation must look natural and read like a possible conversation in the target language. It has to be appropriate for the film and the language used by the characters. [[15]](about:reader?url=https%3A%2F%2Fen.wikibooks.org%2Fwiki%2FAudiovisual_Translation_Modes#cite_note-15)

The aim of a subtitler is to make their work neither too formal nor too colloquial - the tone and register of the translation must be appropriate for the film. Dialogues must make a viewer believe that a conversation is taking place in their native language.

**Dubbing:** It is a mode in which the original soundtrack is completely covered by voices of dubbing artists, whereas songs and music are retained. It is the most difficult and most costly mode. Not only does it require translating the text and acting it out by the actors, but also it forces the producers to hire a separate dubbing director, a person concerned with lip-syncing (the lines have to appear at the same time as the original ones and to have more or less the same number of vowels and consonants - they have to sound similar, an editor and a separate team of producers in touch with the producers of the film. The actors cannot be any actors: sometimes even famous actors are bad at dubbing and some less known ones are perfect for that role)

**Voice-over :** It is a mode in which translated dialogues are read out by an off-screen voice. The voice reads all the dialogues, regardless of the gender of a character on the screen and is usually male. A notable exception is [Krystyna Czubówna](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Krystyna_Czub%C3%B3wna), a famous female voice-over artist, working on nature films or news programmes. The voice-over mode can be used for virtually anything, from films in cinema, to TV series or even songs ( listen to "Piosenka z lektorem" ("Songs with voice-over"), a comedy programme on Radio Zet)

It has various advantages:

* it allows us to learn a foreign language
* it retains the original dialogues
* it improves our reading skills: we have to read quickly to follow the plot
* it is less expensive than dubbing (interestingly enough, it is still more expensive than voice-over)

On the other hand, dubbing is too costly to be used regularly and it does not work well in case of films for adults. It also requires preparation and specialist equipment and can be done only by professionals, whereas subtitles can be done with anyone with an appropriate computer program and a good grasp of a given language.