

Attention distribution during the subtitling process – following the gaze of subtitlers

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While the reception of subtitles has been studied in various eyetracking studies, subtitling as a process has yet to be investigated with established methods from translation process research (Orrego-Carmona et al. 2018). Within the Compass project that aims at developing an innovative subtitling platform, we present results from a usability study of intralingual subtitling. In a mixed-method approach of eyetracking and keylogging, this study investigates the split attention of subtitlers using the commercial tool FAB Subtitler. Eight experienced subtitlers and student subtitlers from ZDF Digital were recorded while creating intralingual subtitles of three 5-minute snippets from a German documentary following the Netflix Timed Text Style Guide. The recording sessions took place in participants' usual work environment. Afterwards participants answered questions regarding their use of the subtitling tool and their final subtitle files went through quality assurance. This study aims at identifying bottlenecks in the subtitling process by analysing participants' use of the tool with regard to efficiency possibly influenced by split attention on too many tasks simultaneously (listening to audio, watching video, typing, revising and spotting, etc.). Cognitive load and efficiency are estimated with measures such as fixation duration and count, keystrokes, pauses and overall duration. We test hypotheses regarding split attention similar to online versus final revision during the translation process (cf. Schaeffer et al., 2019). We expect varying strategies regarding revision and research and long fixations on the audio track and spotting editor. This study reveals pitfalls in the subtitling tool and strategies such as drafting and spotting subtitles before final revision compared to doing everything in one go. Results guide the development of the Compass tool which will be tested and compared at a later stage.

Keywords: subtitling process, usability, split-attention, eyetracking, keylogging

References

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