

Using non-professional subtitle consumption patterns to explore global media flows

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In this study, we track the distribution of subtitles for the final season of House of Cards in the non-professional subtitle platform Addic7ed.com and compare these data against the downloads of the subtitles for the third season in the same platform (Orrego-Carmona, Richter 2018) to study the consumption and impact of non-professional subtitling. Subtitling is an essential tool for the international distribution of audiovisual content. As shown by Netflix's global strategy, subtitles allow for the fast distribution of content in multiple languages and provide companies with the possibility of catering for international audiences.

We claim that tracing the distribution of non-professional subtitles (NPS) helps us understand the consumption patterns of their users. We tracked the distribution of subtitles for the last season for two weeks after its release (2-16 November 2018) and recorded a total of 115008 downloads for 27 languages. In comparison, the subtitles for the third season were downloaded 480298 over the same period of time and were offered in eight languages only. Features identified in the data for the third season are also evident in the new dataset: First, users show a strong inclination for the intralingual subtitles in English. In our third season dataset, English subtitles represent 80.37% of the total downloads, while English subtitles account for 63.77% of the downloads in our new dataset. Equally, both data sets support the claim that NPS respond to an immediate need: users access the content as soon as it is made available.

The increase in the number of languages and the confirmation of the results of the previous study allow us to explore and, to some degree, quantify the impact that NPS has on current society. The collected data provides us with a glimpse into the impact of translation and the role that it has in globalised media.