

USING SUBTITLES TO ENHANCE FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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SUMMARY:

THIS ARTICLE ANALYSES A NOVEL FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING ACTIVITY CONSISTING ON THE STUDENTS' PRODUCTION OF VIDEO SUBTITLES. WITH THE HELP OF SPECIFIC SUBTITLING SOFTWARE, THIS STRATEGY ALLOWS STUDENTS TO UNDERSTAND FOREIGN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND PRODUCTION FROM A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE. ONE OF THE MAIN ADVANTAGES OF THIS STRATEGY IS THAT, SINCE IT MAKES STUDENTS CREATE LANGUAGE WITHIN A FAMILIAR AND MOTIVATING CONTEXT (AUDIOVISUAL EXTRACTS), THEY FEEL THEY PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THEIR OWN LEARNING PROCESS, SO THEIR LANGUAGE ACQUISITION IS ENHANCED. BESIDES, THE COMBINATION OF AUDIO, VISUAL, AND TEXTUAL INFORMATION MAKES THIS TECHNIQUE VERY VALID FOR ALL TYPES OF STUDENTS.

Keywords: subtitles, language learning, video, multimedia.

RESUMEN:

ESTE ARTÍCULO ANALIZA UNA NUEVA ACTIVIDAD PARA EL APRENDIZAJE DE LENGUAS EXTRANJERAS CONSISTENTE EN QUE LOS ALUMNOS PRODUZCAN SUBTÍTULOS DE VÍDEO. CON LA AYUDA DE UN SOFTWARE DE SUBTITULACIÓN ESPECÍFICO, ESTA ESTRATEGIA PERMITE CONPRENDER LA ADQUISICIÓN Y LA PRODUCCIÓN DEL IDIOMA DESDE OTRA PERSPECTIVA. UNA DE SUS VENTAJAS ES QUE, AL HACER QUE LOS ALUMNOS PRODUZCAN LENGUA DENTRO DE UN CONTEXTO FAMILIAR Y MOTIVADOR (EXTRACTOS AUDIO-VISUALES), SIENTEN QUE DESEMPEÑAN UN PAPEL ACTIVO EN SU PROPIO PROCESO DE APRENDIZAJE; ASÍ, MEJORA SU ADQUISICIÓN LINGÜÍSTICA. ADEMÁS, SU COMBINACIÓN DE INFORMACIÓN AUDITIVA, VISUAL Y

TEXTUAL LA HACE VÁLIDA PARA TODOS TIPO DE ALUMNOS.

Palabras clave: subtítulos, aprendizaje de idiomas, video, multimedia.

1. INTRODUCTION

A novel and truly profitable way of acquiring foreign languages is the production of ad hoc subtitles for selected video clips by the students themselves, either in class or in a distance or self-learning environment, that is so generalized nowadays. In this type of activity, the subtitling is performed either to the learners' mother tongue or to the original language with or without the help of a written version of the textual information (Díaz Cintas, 1997b); the audio is normally in the foreign language, but it can likewise be in the students' mother tongue for them to create the captions in the foreign language.

The current spread and progress of computers is slowly leading most schools to have computer labs where each learner or pair of learners can use computers to work on learning activities of all sorts. In this context, this novel language learning activity will be very profitable and worthwhile. Besides, living in this modern society, where the visual component is increasingly powerful, with the majority of the population moving from the computer to the TV and/or DVD and vice versa on an everyday basis, language learners usually feel particularly comfortable with an activity that integrates all these familiar elements (audio, visual, and textual) with which they constantly co-exist. This fact provides extra motivation that is paired with the extensive information about the target culture and society (habits, body language, festivities, idioms, manners, etc.) that the use of video offers, so fundamental in learning a foreign language (Díaz Cintas, 2003).

2. THE USE OF SUBTITLES IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Subtitles in foreign films have existed for a long time in many countries when films were not dubbed into the official target language. Whenever they have been used as a support in foreign language education, subtitles have sometimes been considered distracting and tending to slow down the development of listening skills, because they are seen to make learners rely on the text rather than on the stream of speech. However, many studies have suggested that 'far from being a distraction and a source of laziness, subtitles might have a potential value in helping the learning acquisition process by providing learners with the key to massive quantities of authentic and comprehensible language input' (Vanderplank, 1988: 272-273).

There has always been a clear and relatively generalized prejudice as regards film subtitles related to their 'bothering' nature. And this prejudice is maximized in traditionally dubbing countries such as Spain¹. Provided that regular TV and cinema subtitles are not optional (as it happens with the DVD), many viewers have always considered subtitles a nuisance. Among other things, because they cover visual information and so they are felt to lessen the show's credibility. Furthermore, many people consider audiovisual input to be exclusively ludic, so they do not understand why should they make efforts to read something when they could just hear it in their own language.

Another common prejudice that is related to the use of subtitles or captions as part of foreign language education is the traditional belief that subtitles are disturbing and a source of laziness. There is also a related conviction as to how that captions create a certain degree of dependence of the learner on the captions, that can potentially slow down his listening comprehension skills.

In spite of all this, 'far from being a dangerous and disturbing distraction in language learning, they can bring benefits to those who are *hard of listening*' (Vanderplank, 1988: 277). For many learners, text helps them monitor the speech, a speech that would probably be 'lost' otherwise. In fact, while TV programs and films that are not subtitled normally create a high level of insecurity and anxiety, diverse experiments have demonstrated that the incorporation of subtitles provide instant feedback and therefore positive reinforcement, contributing to create a feeling of security on learners, helping them in the long run to feel ready to watch foreign television or films unsupported by text (Vanderplank, 1988).

Therefore, even if there are some learners for whom text can be regarded as a distraction from the stream of speech, research evidence shows that the majority of learners use it as a support for comprehension and for finding new words. Thus, when used to learn or practice foreign languages, subtitles need to be used for a purpose. Students, through different training activities, must learn to use subtitles for a reason, other than simply to understand 'everything' that is being said.

When dealing with the potential usefulness of video input and subtitles in second language learning, it is necessary to bear in mind the major effects of visual associations on memory and the mnemonic power of imagery (Danan, 1992). A subtitled video provides a triple connection between image, sound in one language and text, normally in another, sound and text being typically linked by translation. This type of connection generally encourages strong associations for retention and language use. If we consider the supplementary effects that both visual images and translation on their own typically entail for foreign language learning, their combination

¹ There is a general belief among Spanish people that Spain has one of the best dubbing industries. And this is unfortunately another reason why subtitles are rather unpopular among Spanish viewers. Be it true or false, this fact surely hides some kind of economic interests that lead to the hindering of opportunities for the subtitling industry.

here is necessarily very powerful. Canning-Wilson (2000) reaffirms this statement when she suggests that 'images contextualized in video or on its own can help to reinforce language learning, provided the learner can see immediate meaning in terms of vocabulary recognition', since one of the best ways of assuring this immediacy of meaning is with the help of subtitles. And all this is enhanced when subtitles are used not in a passive but in an active mode, being the students themselves the ones who create them.

2.1. Advantages and limitations

'Students using captioned materials show significant improvement in reading comprehension, listening comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, word recognition, decoding skills, and overall motivation to read. (Parks, 1994).

Some of the major benefits of using subtitles in language learning activities can be summarized as follows (partly based on King, 2002):

- Their use bridges the gap between reading and listening skills.
- Students can learn to process text in the foreign language rapidly and improve rapid reading, by trying to keep up with the subtitles that accompany the dialogues.
- Students can learn how to pronounce many words, consciously and unconsciously.
- Subtitles allow learners to follow the plot easily.
- Learners can develop word recognition skills.
- Captions can reinforce the understanding of English context-bound expressions, and help learners to acquire new vocabulary and idioms.
- Students can understand humour (such as jokes) that would be hard to recognize without the help of the captions. Humour can be a difficult, but rewarding subject for the language classroom (Lonergan, 1989), and subtitles help to understand it, enhancing the enjoyable character of the activity.
- Subtitles can enhance students' concentration in following lines.
- Finally, subtitles can motivate students to study English outside the classroom context, especially by watching TV and cinema, listening to the original dialogues.

'Si el docente consigue iniciar al estudiante en el ritual cinematográfico de ver películas en versión original con subtítulos, por pocas que sean, estará directamente ampliando las posibilidades didácticas de los alumnos' (Díaz Cintas, 1997a: 190).

It needs to be noted that subtitles, be it in the students' mother tongue or in the foreign language, are often some kind of summary of the textual information contained in the original dialogues, i.e., it is not always the exact reproduction of the aural information. This is so because the human eye needs to have time to read the captions without missing any visual

information; hence, the subtitling techniques used by professionals have a series of rules as regards the rapport between the time each subtitle remains on the screen and the number of characters it can contain² (Díaz Cintas, 2003).

In this sense, many times, audiovisual translators need to condense the sense in different words to make it fit the temporal limitations of reading time. This fact can be criticised by regular viewers who often claim ‘he did not say that!’, when they read the captions of a film or a TV series. However, as to foreign language education, this fact can be considered a benefit rather than a disadvantage because it can motivate students to notice the differences between audio and text. This is a type of activity that learners usually like, since once they notice any difference they feel reassured and motivated because that means they can understand authentic audio, no matter the captions.

It needs to be admitted that there are two main common handicaps of using captions in foreign language education. One is that learners may concentrate so much in reading the captions that they forget about the dialogues. However, this problem can be solved by preparing specific tasks that force learners to pay attention to the dialogues, so that they get used to do both activities, reading and listening, at the same time or alternatively. The second problem deals with the difficulty to break the habit of reading captions once students are used to doing so. This is a habit that many learners already possess, even if they listen to the dialogues, since the captions make them feel safe and confident; in these cases, it is the task of the teacher to prepare tasks that combine the use of captions with viewings without them, or any other task that can make students feel equally secure with or without the support of captions. This way, the support is removed gradually (in a ‘scaffolding’ manner), until learners feel totally comfortable abandoning it.

All things considered, the use of video subtitles provides a dynamic and rich source of communicative language in use. It is dynamic because all languages are in constant change, never fixed, and the best way to reflect this is through updated video, TV and other media, and rich because the resources and techniques are multiple. With the appropriate guidance and training, subtitles give learners a subjective support that they need many times to feel more comfortable and motivated when learning a foreign language, and an objective aid in terms of recognition, maintenance, and production of new and already known linguistic items, thanks to the multiple associations they provide, together with the context and the environment in which they appear.

3. METODOLOGICAL PROPOSAL

² Although not universally agreed, and varying depending on the medium (TV, cinema or DVD), there is a commonly followed rule, known as the ‘six seconds law’, that establishes the human ability of reading two lines containing 35 characters and spaces every 6 seconds.

There is considerable evidence based on subtitles affirming that multimedia may be an effective environment for foreign language acquisition (Brett & Nash, 1999), since it provides learners with the opportunity to negotiate meaning, to notice language, to become motivated, and to enhance most language learning areas, specially those related to the spoken language, that are typically among the most challenging to teach and acquire.

The methodological proposal that is described here is directly related to this type of multimedia learning, since it looks for the combination of computer software, video, subtitles, and interactive activities, and it promotes the integration of the speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills.

The general methodological approach that is followed in this proposal is Communicative Language Teaching in combination with Task Based Learning, since it provides a very flexible and functional perspective to foreign language teaching and learning around concepts like 'communication', and 'social interaction', which the author considers superior to more traditional ones like 'linguistic system' and 'prescriptiveness, correctness and accuracy'.

The student profile for this proposal only excludes children, since it can be performed with cognitively developed individuals, including adults and adolescents of all levels. As to the teacher's role, this is very demanding in the appropriate selection of the clips (and accompanying activities) that are suitable for a specific group of learners, and particular language learning items.

3.1. The video clips

The sources of the authentic video clips to be used in this strategy are short sequences taken from English speaking sitcoms, soaps, series, films, short films, TV commercials, or documentaries. TV series and sitcoms are probably the best choice due to their simplicity and straightforwardness, their short duration, the fact that they follow of a storyline, the multiplicity of characters, and their variety of typical everyday situations. Besides, the messages rendered are not so concentrated in these shows as they are in commercials, and the transmission of information is far less intense, so the understanding becomes easier.

The clips selected for each lesson should depend on what the teacher considers necessary for learners to practice at a given point in the course, e.g. situations involving greetings, presentations, invitations, announcements, offers, requests, weddings, etc. Practically any situation can be studied and practiced with these strategies, and they can trigger many activities dealing with different language skills. Additionally, the scenes selected should be self-contained, having significance in themselves, a factor widely recognized to be rewarding by pedagogic experts. Besides, this fact implies that learners who have missed previous classes can follow the activity without feeling behind or lost.

A good example of a suitable sitcom is the popular American TV show *Friends*, which consists of ten seasons of twenty-three episodes each,

crowded with interesting and funny communicative situations of all sorts, with a slightly varying number of participants, particularly apt for the study of different linguistic and communicative elements and strategies. It could be argued that this is a comedy and many aspects of humour are rooted in socio-cultural areas, slang usage, obscure contemporary references and so on, and can remain inaccessible to all but the most advanced learners (Lonergan, 1989). However, many gags in this show are relatively simple, and it is certainly very rewarding for learners to understand any type of joke in the other language, since is generally considered the hardest language modality.

Ideally, the scenes should be already selected, loaded, and prepared in advance by a teacher/material developer, with particular interactive activities attached, divided into levels and age groups, making up multimedia CD-ROMs or online courseware. This would significantly facilitate the teacher's and the learner's work and maximize his learning, and could be easily used both in face-to-face and in distance learning environments. Otherwise, it is the teacher who needs to select the appropriate clips himself and cut the scenes up with the help of special software. An example of useful software to take scenes out of DVDs with or without subtitles is Flash DVD Ripper (2003), that cuts any fragment from a DVD or video file and turns it into an independent video file, that can be reproduced elsewhere (see figure 1).



Figure 1: Flash DVD Ripper's main interface.

Once clips are selected, the teacher needs to integrate them in screening frames, combining tasks and viewings, and offering various degrees of support (e.g. the script transcripts corresponding to the scenes, vocabulary help, etc.) and interaction. This can be done in a simple way, e.g. designing a Power Point presentation, or in a more complex one, creating more interactive environments in the form of multimedia CD-ROMs. In the former case, the use of a single computer per class controlled by the teacher can be enough, while in the latter, it is necessary to make use of a computer lab, where each learner or group of learners has access to a computer to be able to work interactively.

Luckily, in the near future, language learning multimedia programs of this kind will be all set-up, with the scenes loaded and the activities prepared to be used interactively, divided into different levels and topics; this would be the best possible scenario for both teachers (it would save them a lot of time and work) and students (they could work on the activities at home too, at their own pace, for further practice, for revision, etc.).

3.2. The subtitling strategy

This strategy consists on the production of subtitles for selected video clips by the students themselves with the help of a subtitling program. In this type of activity, the audio should normally be in the foreign language, and the subtitling can in principle be performed either in the learners' mother tongue or in the original language, depending on the learning context. Likewise, this strategy can be carried out with or without the support of the script corresponding to the clip, depending on the students' level and teaching goals. Ideally, this strategy should be accompanied of tasks of different sorts to be performed before, while, and after the exercise.

The main goal of this strategy as a whole is the understanding and subsequent production of particular communicative function or task. At the same time, information related to the acquisition of lexical items, prosodic features, register, and cultural awareness is expected to be received both consciously with the help of diverse activities, and unconsciously, thanks to the various screenings. Besides, written language is made use of in the form of translation, the objectives are taken further, towards the practice of spelling, writing, and translation skills. Furthermore, through translation, learners become more conscious of the structural patterns of the linguistic items involved in the clip.

This pedagogic strategy based on subtitling is flexible in that it can be performed in three different ways, according to the specific goals followed:

- i. From English dialogues to English subtitles: bimodal subtitling.
- ii. From English dialogues to subtitles in the learner's mother tongue: standard subtitling.

iii. From dialogues in the learner's mother tongue to English subtitles: reversed subtitling³.

In the first case, the technique is similar to the one used to create subtitles for deaf or hearing-impaired viewers, but without including references to non-verbal sounds (such as 'the music sounds' or 'there is a knock at the door'). This variant could be performed depending on the major aim pursued by the activity. As an example, it could be used as a means to familiarize students with the subtitling technique and to practice the software.

In the second case, when students have to put English dialogues into subtitles in their mother tongue, some people may feel inclined to compare this activity to traditional translation exercises. Nevertheless, in this case, a different technique is employed (it is not a text-to-text activity), and the familiar environment motivates students to take time to analyse both languages. Furthermore, this type of exercise, putting aural linguistic information in the form of subtitles, makes learners go right to the essence of the message. Hence, it avoids a word for word translation, and directly aims at a semantic and pragmatic transfer between both semiotic systems, which helps to better understand the inner workings of both systems.

The last combination of audio and text is similar more challenging than the previous ones because learners need to produce the subtitles in the foreign language in the form of inverse translation. Unfortunately, using this format, the activity loses the rich listening comprehension component of English dialogues.

In terms of the internal structure of the practice, the strategy should contain pre-activities in the form of warm ups, the subtitling activity itself, and post-activities, containing language focus, role plays and/or acting outs and feedback. Ideally, the communicative functions covered by the clips need to be linked (conceptually, grammatically) to the contents that are being learnt in the course. An instance of a pre-task exercise is an elicitation of ideas that is aimed at bringing learners close to the topic and/or linguistic contents dealt within the clips.

While the subtitling activity takes place, the teacher must circulate around the class to solve possible doubts or problems. Besides, this activity can be interrupted at key moments considered appropriate by the teacher by oral discussions, containing questions and answers related to the content and characters, to provide some variety to the task. After a certain period of time (that may vary depending on the learners' level and length of the clip), various subtitles offered by students are selected at random and reproduced on the teacher's computer. Thus, everybody can see how they fit into the scenes, and the whole class as a group can debate orally upon the different solutions, providing various types of feedback, solutions, and alternatives.

After that, some kind of language focus section dealing with the key linguistic contents under study is needed to work on formal aspects of language within a functional perspective, and in order to settle down

³ The remaining subtitling techniques are not regarded within the scope of this proposal.

linguistic contents in the students' minds, organizing the key aspects of the input previously received. Finally, a last task should be performed: the role play reproduction in groups of a similar scene, either as an improvised oral practice of the new communicative strategies and vocabulary just analysed and worked, or as a pronunciation activity, imitating the prosody on the clip by acting out the dialogues of the clips.

Supposing that there are enough computers available, a lesson of this kind can be organized in the following way: students may work either individually or in small groups with their computers, and the teacher needs to have either his own PC projected onto a big screen to be seen by the whole class or interconnected to the students', so that his screen can be visible to their students at all times.

The lesson needs to be reasonable in terms of level, so that the students do not feel overwhelmed with the difficulties, and in terms of time, so that they do not become weary of the activity. Especially when translation is included, good bilingual and monolingual dictionaries should be accessible in each computer, for students to be able to rapidly look for the best translation options and meanings available for difficult and intricate words that might appear.

This subtitling strategy as a whole (all versions included, bimodal, standard, and reversed) may appear somewhat complicated for teachers at the beginning, basically because of the former preparation required on the use of the specific software and the loading of video clips. However, once these first steps are overcome, the activity proves to be relatively easy to perform.

The integration of this subtitling strategy in the syllabus of a certain language learning course can be done in different ways, according to the specific needs of a particular group of language learners and depending on the type of foreign language learning environment. The main guidelines in terms of time would be that the lesson last from 50 minutes to an hour. The most appropriate time for such an exercise (if it does not take a whole class) is probably towards the end of the session, since the students' foreign language mental schemata is already active and concentrated in the subject under study. Hence, they can absorb new information more easily. Likewise, inserted in the syllabus, this strategy could be performed every four classes.

There are two specific general benefits derived from the particular structure of this strategy that need to be described here:

-On the one hand, an obvious consequence is that it can help students improve their written production, providing them with practice regarding condensed expression, since they must attempt to preserve the main ideas of the message while adapting the discourse to short chunks in which the complete original dialogues cannot fit (Díaz Cintas, 1997b). Hence, this type of exercise is very helpful in order to practice summarizing skills since it strengthens the students' ability to maintain the most relevant information while aiming at economy of expression, one of the main discursive differences between English and other languages, such as Spanish. Also, it helps

students understanding the internal coherence and cohesion of texts, since it must be kept at all times.

-On the other hand, there is a constant acquisition of new vocabulary, since it is a challenge for the student to try and transfer the source language lexical items to their respective equivalents in context in his mother tongue, or to reduce them to the essence of the message in the original language, searching for possible synonyms. This vocabulary acquisition is helped by audiovisual associations in memory that allow retention and future recovery.

It should remain clear that this activity has been conceived as a pedagogically solid and thorough reinforcing exercise that can be used as a springboard for many other types of activities, such as pronunciation exercises or various task-based or content-based language learning practices. Alternatively, this technique can be used as the basis of a project activity, where complete short films, a chapter from a TV sitcom, or a short documentary feature film can be subtitled once or twice a year, so that students feel that they are fulfilling a real and complete task; although this type of project may take several sessions and outside class time, students will feel the extra motivational factor of achieving a real outcome with total completion and achievement.

All in all, subtitling as a pedagogic technique based on CLT and TBL can be considered as a novel attention-grabbing resource in which students can confidently work on the foreign language in a rather comprehensive way.

3.2.1. Supporting software available

Nowadays, there are several subtitling software programs for professional audiovisual translators which can be suitably adapted to a foreign language learning environment. Three examples of this type of software are Subtitle Workshop (2005), Subtitul@m (2003), and Fab Subtitler (2003). In this section, only the former will be fully described, since it is free to download and presents the simplest interface.

Subtitle Workshop is a program developed by UROSoft. The user-friendliness of this program makes it suitable for the non-expert computer user. In fact, its functioning is rather easy to master with little practice, so that the system can be perfectly adequate for any kind of young or adult foreign language learner with basic command of computers. This program loads video files and then allows the user to insert subtitles and select the time in which each subtitle should be entered and also the time in which that subtitle should vanish from the screen.

It is the work of the teacher to provide students relevant hints related to subtitling theory. In this regard, students should know that the time limits selected for each subtitle must be taken into account when focusing on the maximum number of characters that fit in each caption. This is typically based on the human eye's ability and speed to read the subtitles without

losing visual information during that time and is commonly established between 28 and 40 characters and spaces every six seconds depending on the equipment used and the medium of transmission, be it cinema, DVD or TV (Díaz Cintas, 2001; 2003). However, these rules can be relatively disregarded for the purpose of this pedagogic strategy.

Using a software such as Subtitle Workshop for this type of language acquisition activity, it should be relatively easy for students to manage the equipment. Ideally, a series of short well-selected clips should be already loaded into the system. Likewise, time limits of the different captions for each scene need to be established in advance by the educator. Thus, learners can concentrate from the beginning on the specific linguistic and communicative aspects underlined by the language activity and accompanying tasks. The technical work of the learner as to the use of the software is limited to the downloading of the movie file and the file containing the empty subtitles, the completion of the captions spots through translation, and the eventual checking of the resulting movie with captions, since captions are finally saved into the system and incorporated to the video file.

It is relevant to note that this program provides information on errors and some mistakes (such as double spacing, omission of final full stop, etc.) can automatically be corrected. It also contains a subtitle editor that allows users to edit and manage each subtitle in flexible ways, in terms of fonts, colour, etc.

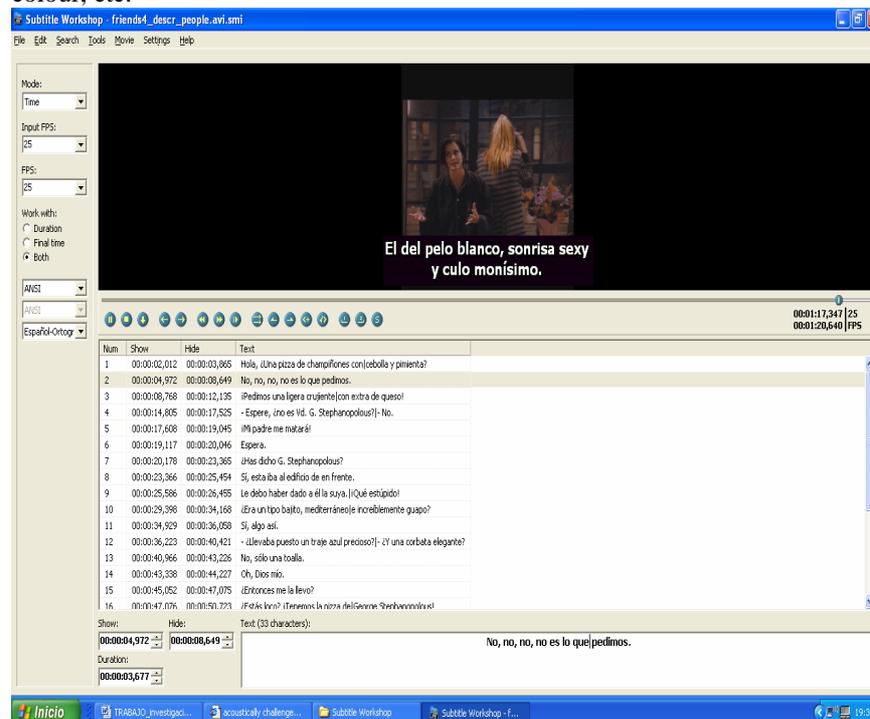


Figure 2: Subtitle Workshop's working interface. Each section of the interface is easily recognisable: the film view screen and its option buttons are at the top, and the subtitle editor and its option buttons are at the bottom.

The other two subtitling programs referred to above are Subtitul@m and Fab Subtitler, and they could likewise be used for this type of language learning activity, given their overall clarity and relative simplicity. The format and operation mode of these two programs is similar to that of Subtitle Workshop, in that they allow users to load video files, select the time limits, edit captions, etc. However, as it was mentioned at the beginning of this sub-section, Subtitle Workshop's general features look simpler and less elaborated, and it is totally free to download in its complete version from the Web on <http://subtitle-workshop.uptodown.com/>.

4. CONCLUSION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Up to this point, a detailed but flexible proposal relative to computer-based subtitling for language learning has been made. It has been introduced and explained, including details about software programs, a proposed methodology with different possibilities, and some of the advantages it can offer.

One of the major advantages of the strategy presented in this proposal is the technological support with which it counts, that makes it possible to use it in both face-to-face and distance learning environments. In this context, the ideal situation is for the strategy to be integrated in a multimedia software or online courseware. Besides, the novelty and the ludic character of this activity is expected to highly increase the motivation and participation of learners, something necessary in language learning and not so straight-forward to acquire.

Provided the historical rejection of many countries towards subtitled films, these exercises could motivate students to appreciate the pedagogical and cultural advantages of subtitles, and realize the huge amount of 'content' of the film that does not reach the audience when it is presented to them dubbed. Hence, they will be able to learn to appreciate original version films outside the academic context, by watching moving pictures and other types of programmes in their original version, thus keeping up and improving day by day their command of the foreign language.

What is more, given the fact that subtitles are typically encountered by students outside the academic context, and having worked empirically with them, even knowing the technique needed to produce them, learners are expected to be able to develop a critical attitude towards future observations of the same phenomenon. All things considered, this new general attitude towards video in its original version could eventually have a positive impact on the number of films in their original version that are released in cinemas,

on the quality of subtitles, and ultimately, it can lead to a whole new attitude towards foreign language learning in general, and English as a foreign language in particular, in terms of an easier overall acquisition and a friendlier and more pleasurable learning approach.

Consequently, it is hoped that further basic and applied research on the use of video and subtitles will increasingly encourage teachers to start using DVD and advanced computer technologies in order to make the best use of video and subtitles to enhance the students' language learning motivation and skills in general, and listening and speaking proficiency in particular. In addition, the author hopes that more teachers will devote to exploring the multiple and potential uses of this type of methodology and technology in novel ways.

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