Developing a model of process strategies in subtitling:
Redefining translation strategies taking a process perspective

Thesis Proposal by Kathrine Carstensen

Supervisors
Associate professor Carmen Heine, BCOM (principal supervisor)
Associate professor Helle Dam Jensen, BCOM (co-supervisor)

Assessors
Associate professor Henrik Gottlieb, University of Copenhagen
Associate professor Anne Schjoldager, BCOM

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Department of Business Communication, Aarhus School of Business and Social Sciences, Aarhus University
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1. Introducing the PhD project

In a jigsaw puzzle, the pieces fit together in a certain way to depict a certain picture, and it is crucial to have an overview of the whole picture to identify the right place of the individual pieces. This metaphor can also be applied to subtitling (Gottlieb, 1996) where all the pieces need to fit together in the right way to make up a good product. Subtitlers face challenges in their process of completing the puzzle: they are subjected to space and time constraints, which calls for a large degree of condensation; the source text is oral, which demands good listening skills; and the target text must be cued\(^1\), which requires rhythmic skills. Additionally, subtitlers are paid by each translated minute (Forum for Billedmedieoversætttere, 2010) which means that the faster they translate, the more money they make. Factors such as these have an impact on the way subtitlers work. Furthermore, due to these characteristics, subtitling (diasemiotic translation) differs from isosemiotic translation\(^2\) because the subtitling process entails more elements and is therefore complicated by the characteristics described above. In consequence, from a translation research point of view, these characteristics make the subtitling process extremely interesting for investigation, not only because of the challenges the subtitlers are facing in their everyday practice, but also because the subtitling process as a phenomenon has not yet been mapped theoretically.

The PhD thesis reported about here is situated within Translation Studies (TS) with a focus on the specialized areas of Audiovisual Translation (AVT) and Translation Process Research (TPR). There is a body of literature in TS about the internal process (cognitive, mental structures (Göpferich, 2008)) as regards isosemiotic translation (Hansen, 2005; Göpferich, 2008), as well as about the external process (situational elements) (Risku, 2004; Ehrensberger-Dow & Massey, 2015). But hitherto, to my knowledge, no one has dealt with the internal and external processes of subtitlers. Hence, the combination of AVT and TPR constitutes a research gap. The aim of the thesis is to create a subtitling process model which can fill this research gap and build a bridge between AVT and TPR. I am well aware that it is impossible to find a final solution to what goes on inside the ‘black box’ (Heiden, 2005) — “Die alles bestimmende Variable oder der zentrale Motor des Prozesses lassen sich nicht finden” (Risku, 2004, p. 81) — but I do believe that it is possible to show tendencies which may then be the object of further investigation.

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\(^1\) Cueing: “The process of defining the in and out times of individual subtitles” (Transedit, 2003). Cueing is often also referred to as spotting (Carroll & Ivarsson, 1998).

\(^2\) To separate subtitling from ‘regular translation’ or ‘translation proper’ (Jakobson, 1959; Zethsen, 2007; Dizdar, 2009) in the PhD thesis, the term isosemiotic translation (Gottlieb, 1994, 2010a) covers written to written translation, whereas the term diasemiotic translation (Gottlieb, 1994, 2010a) is used to describe subtitling. Both terms can be applied to intralingual and interlingual translation, but the present research project focuses on interlingual diasemiotic translation.
The model to be developed takes the notion of translation process strategies as its point of departure. The PhD thesis takes a holistic approach which goes beyond a distinction between the macro-/microstrategy approach traditionally performed in TS as described e.g. by Schjoldager et al. (2010). Here, a translation process strategy is taken to include everything the subtitler does. A more precise definition will be developed on the basis of the empirical data (see section 2.3.1). In order to develop this holistic subtitling process model, it is necessary to take the internal and external subtitling processes into account. External processes consist of everything that goes on around the translator and the translation task: The translation brief, the physical workplace, colleagues – basically “everything in a translation which can be observed by another person” (Christensen, 2011, p. 138). Internal processes consist of cognitive structures which are reflected in translation process strategies such as retrieval and comprehension strategies (Krings, 1986a). These are more difficult to access than the external processes, as they cannot be directly observed, but can be accessed through various methods which will be presented in section 2.3. In consequence, the PhD thesis focuses on the following research question:

*What characterizes the external and internal subtitling processes and how do these affect each other?*

The modelling of the subtitling process contributes to AVT and TPR by visualizing the process and presenting it in a structured and holistic manner. The model is built from two sources: existing translation process models of isosemiotic translation and empirical data of subtitling processes. Hence, firstly, existing state-of-the-art translation process models (e.g. Krings, 1986a; Hönig, 1995; Risku, 1998; PACTE, 2003; Göpferich, 2008; Schaeffer & Carl, 2013) constitute an important part of the theoretical framework. Because subtitling is defined as a type of translation (Pedersen, 2011), it is supposed that these models, although developed for isosemiotic translation, can be used as a theoretical basis for the analysis of subtitling. However, subtitling differs from isosemiotic translation in a number of ways as mentioned above, and these factors peculiar to subtitling processes are not incorporated in any existing translation process models.

Secondly, the model will be based on empirical data from a mixed methods study (see section 3.2) divided into two sub-studies: Sub-study 1 is mainly quantitative and examines the external subtitling process by means of a questionnaire with both closed and open questions. Sub-study 1 examines the working conditions and workflow (see section 4) and the social status (Dam & Zethsen, 2009b, 2011) of the subtitling craft (see section 5). It is relevant to examine the working conditions and workflow because, on the one hand, there is hardly any research literature on the subject, and, on the other hand, it will provide an important insight into the subtitling world which is crucial for the preparation
Status is part of this project because the self-concept of the translators presumably has an impact on the subtitling process (Kiraly, 1995). Furthermore, the open questions in the questionnaire allow for a qualitative perspective on the themes of the questionnaire, e.g. the social status of the subtitling craft as perceived by subtitlers, the subtitlers' educational background, and their motivation to become subtitlers. Sub-study 2, a case study, is qualitative and examines the internal subtitling processes, e.g. which strategies the subtitlers employ during the subtitling processes. Here, process research methods such as observation, screen recording, and cue-based retrospective interviews are applied (see section 3.4). The sub-studies are linked, as they examine how the internal and external processes affect each other, thereby taking data from both sub-studies into consideration.

I expect my research to contribute to both theory and practice in the following ways:

- Theoretically, the subtitling process model can fill the research gap between AVT and TPR.
- Descriptively, the findings of the questionnaire can be presented to the subtitling industry to show what characterizes Danish subtitlers, under which circumstances they work, and how they work.
- Practically, the model of the subtitling process can be used to aid the efficiency of the subtitling process.
- Didactically, the model can be used in subtitling courses at universities and subtitling training at agencies, because it gives the learners a visual as well as theoretically and empirically founded insight into the subtitling process. This may enhance the learners’ awareness of their processes which in turn may raise the quality of the subtitles.

With two more years until the thesis deadline, many things are still unclear and may be subject to discussion and revision. This TP can thus be seen as the current state of the thesis. The structure of the TP is as follows: A brief literature review is presented in chapter 2 followed by a description of the methodology in chapter 3. The data collection for sub-study 1 has been completed, partly analyzed, and the preliminary findings are described in chapters 4 and 5. A pilot study of sub-study 2 has been completed, and some preliminary thoughts and further proceedings in the research approach are presented in chapter 6. Furthermore, in chapter 7, a number of open questions remain which serve as a notion of departure for the discussion in the oral defense of the TP. This TP closes with a description of the next steps of the PhD process in chapter 8 followed by the PhD plan in chapter 9.
2. Brief literature review

In the following, a brief literature review of the field and specialized areas is presented. The scope of the literature review is to lay out the theoretical framework on which the thesis is based. In the thesis, key concepts, definitions, and models of TS, AVT and TPR will be discussed, but unfortunately, such a discussion would exceed the limits of this TP.

2.1 Translation Studies: The Skopos theory as game changer

Since the rise of TS as a research discipline, research has gone in many directions, and today, due to the increasing need for translations in these times of globalization, new areas are explored, such as machine translation, transcreation, and AVT. Among the different definitions of translation, some focus on the product:


“The process of translation between two written languages involves the translator changing an original written text [...] in the original verbal language [...] into a written text in a different verbal language.” (Munday, 2012, p. 8)

And some include the process:

“[...] a message transfer from one language into another.” (Schjoldager et al., 2010, p. 27)

Because this project takes a holistic approach examining the process without ignoring the product, it adopts the following definition of translation: ”Any process, or product hereof, in which a text is replaced by another text reflecting, or inspired by, the original entity.” (Gottlieb, 2010a, p. 42)

The study of translation is far from a new discipline, although it was first recognized as a research discipline of its own as of 1972 where Holmes presented his paper The Name and Nature of Translation Studies (Holmes, 1988). In Reiß’ and Vermeer’s Grundlegung einer allgemeinen Translationstheorie (1984), the Skopos theory was introduced. Skopos means goal, and hence, according to the Skopos theory, ”[d]ie Dominante aller Translation ist deren Zweck” (Reiß & Vermeer, 1984, p. 96). With the invention of the Skopos theory, the so-called pendulum swings (Schjoldager et al., 2010) between word-for-word and sense-for-sense focus (Munday, 2012) were no longer relevant. Following these arguments, both approaches now seem to be accepted, and there no longer seems to be a right or wrong focus, as long as the translation follows the intended purpose. Nord (1993, 1997) developed two macrostrategies on the basis of the Skopos theory within
the framework of what she calls Functional Translatology (Nord, 2012): documentary and instrumental translation. Whereas documentary translation is highly source text dependent, not giving the translator much room to change the source text form or content, instrumental translation focuses on the target text which grants the translator the possibility to be creative and free, as long as the translation still fulfills its Skopos (Nord, 1993). The macrostrategies are to be regarded as two extremes on a continuum; every translation can be placed somewhere between the two extremes but is never 100 % documentary or 100 % instrumental.

The PhD thesis subscribes to the Skopos approach as described above. However, in the development of the Skopos theory and the Functional Translatology, the scholars presumably had isosemiotic and not diasemiotic translation in mind. As mentioned above, subtitling is a special type of translation, especially because of the need to condense the source text. Thus, when subtitling, it is important that the subtitler can choose whichever strategy he finds appropriate in a given situation; the Skopos theory makes this possible. For this reason, subtitling can be considered to be part of TS, although in many ways subtitling differs from isosemiotic translation (see Pedersen, 2011).

2.2 Audiovisual Translation: A new research area
Because of the relatively short history of the television, AVT is a fairly new research area located within TS. It is also an area which, according to Pérez-González (2014), yet lacks systematic theorization. Hence, a literature review about AVT is naturally limited. This literature review will depart from the notion of definitions of AVT and briefly refer to important works in the area.

At a general level, AVT can be defined as “das Übersetzen von Medienformaten, die einen sichtbaren und einen hörbaren Teil haben” (Jüngst, 2010, p. 1). Gottliebs offers a more detailed definition: “[T]he translation of transient polysemiotic texts presented on screen to mass audiences” (Gottlieb, 2010b, pp. 205-206). AVT has several sub-disciplines: subtitling, dubbing, and audio description to name but a few (Jüngst, 2010; Pérez-González, 2014). Within the last fifteen years, the interest in AVT has grown immensely. This can be seen in the proliferation of research literature within the field, and the proliferation of courses offered at undergraduate as well as postgraduate levels (Pérez-González, 2014). Technological development in the area is rapid and AVT is still in the process of catching up.

Subtitles were invented in 1929 (Gottlieb, 2002) and have experienced an immense progress since the invention of the DVD (Georgakopoulou, 2006). Gottlieb (2010b, p. 208) defines subtitling as “diasemic translation in polysemiotic media (including films, TV, video and DVD) in the form of one or more lines of written text presented on the screen in sync with the original dialogue”. Subtitling is a complex multimodal process (Gambier, 2006; Pérez-González, 2014), as it “endeavours to recount
the original dialogue of the speakers, as well as the discursive elements that appear in the image [...],
and the information that is contained in the soundtrack” (Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2007, p. 8). Subtitling also differs from isosemiotic translation, as space and time are limited which makes condensation an inevitable part of the subtitling process (Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2007). Because of
the rules and constraints of subtitling, Carroll and Ivarsson (1998) have created the Code of Good
Subtitling Practice which subtitlers can use to make sure that their subtitles adhere to the standards.

Research in subtitling is not limited to guidelines. There are works on subtitling strategies (Gottlieb,
1994; Chen, 2004; Chiaro, 2006, 2010), fansubbing (Bogucki, 2009; Wang, 2014), multimodality
(Taylor, 2004; Gambier, 2006; Pérez-González, 2014), didactics (Díaz Cintas, 2008; Kruger, 2008;
Taylor, 2009) and many more. Some of the newest anthologies comprising articles with different
approaches to subtitling include Díaz Cintas and Anderman (2009) and Díaz Cintas and Neves (2015).

2.3 Translation Process Research: Moving from product to process focus

The first larger works on internal translation processes appeared in the 1980s; Krings (1986b),
Gerloff (1988), Lörscher (1986) and Séguinot (1989) were some of the pioneers within the area, as
they went from focusing on the product to focusing on the process. The goal of TPR, according to
Risku (2014, p. 334), “is to establish a deeper understanding of how translations are produced, thus
identifying the main factors on which the translation process depends and how these factors
influence each other.” This goal corresponds to the goal of the PhD thesis (see chapter 1).

The primary method used in the beginning of TPR to access the internal translation process was the
think-aloud protocol (TAP) introduced by Ericsson and Simon (1980). When using TAPs, “human
subjects are asked to perform a (translation) task and to verbalise their thoughts while performing
it” (Jääskeläinen, 2002, p. 108). TAPs were claimed to have only little influence on the translation
process. However, when ecological validity (see section 3.4) became an important concept (Risku,
2004; Göpferich, 2008; Risku, 2010; Hansen, 2013; Ehrensberger-Dow, 2014), this method became
outdated, as research showed that it affected the validity of the data (Bernardini, 2002).

Today, partly due to technological progress, a variety of methods is used, for instance retrospective
interviews (Hansen, 2006; Englund Dimitrova & Tiselius, 2014), keylogging (Jakobsen & Schou, 1999;
Schou et al., 2009; CRITT, 2012), and neurolinguistic methods like eye tracking and EEG (Jakobsen,
2011; Annoni et al., 2012; García, 2013; O’Brien, 2013). Krings (2005) developed an overview of the
methods used in TPR. The translation by Dam-Jensen and Heine (2009, p. 3) is shown in the model
below:
In the model, offline methods refer to processes after the translation process. These are divided into product analysis and verbal-report data. Product analysis comprises different types of analyses of the translation product. Offline verbal-report data entails among other things retrospective interviews. Online methods are applied during the translation process. Observation of behaviour takes place during the translation process, e.g. via observation protocols and eye tracking. Online verbal-report data entails among other things TAPs.

On the basis of TPR methods and data from experiments and field studies, different TPR models have been created. Some focus on the process (Krings, 1986a; Hönig, 1995; Kiraly, 1995; Schaeffer & Carl, 2013), some on (the development of) translation competence (PACTE, 2000, 2003; Göpferich, 2008), and some on the differences and similarities between layman and expert translation (Risku, 1998). The subtitling process model developed in the thesis will be based on a thorough analysis of these existing models as well as on empirical data.

2.3.1 Towards a new definition of translation process strategies
Strategy as a concept is a key element of the research approach when creating a model of the translation process strategies in subtitling which incorporates the external and internal subtitling processes and depicts their mutual effect on each other. When dealing with translation strategies, the focus is usually on the product, where the source text is compared with the target text. Many taxonomies have been developed on this basis; strategies for translation in general (e.g. Schjoldager et al., 2010) as well as strategies for special purposes, e.g. for subtitles (Gottlieb, 1994). Lörscher defines translation strategy as follows:

"Translation strategies have been defined by me as procedures which the subjects employ in order to solve translation problems. Accordingly, translation strategies have
their starting-point in the realization of a problem by a subject, and their termination in a (possibly preliminary) solution to the problem or in the subject’s realization of the insolubility of the problem at the given point in time. Between the realization of a translation problem and the realization of its solution or insolubility, further verbal and/or mental activities can occur which can be interpreted as being strategy steps or elements of translation strategies.” (Lörscher, 1996, p. 27, emphasis in original)

According to this definition, translation strategies always have something to do with problem solving. In a recent article, however, Muñoz Martín (2010, p. 182) states that “[u]nproblematic text segments are at least as interesting as those where problem-solving strategies are applied, because translators have been acting and cognizing in both”. In the PhD thesis, a new definition of translation strategy is necessary, as the thesis does not only look at strategies that are problem-based, but take a holistic view on translation process strategies.

3. Methodology
In this chapter, the research traditions within philosophy of science on which the thesis is based are presented, and the methods used in the mixed methods study are described.

3.1 Philosophy of science
The methodology used in the thesis is situated within the humanities. Firstly, I seek to understand and interpret elements of human activity: strategies carried out by subtitlers. In this sense, the study has roots in hermeneutic ideas according to which understanding and interpretation of a phenomenon is a crucial part of the research process (Kinsella, 2006; Gadamer, 2013). It is also the humanistic approach to science that paves the way for the use of qualitative methods (in this case observation, screen recording, and retrospective interviews), an approach which is central in my analysis of the strategies employed by the subtitlers in the subtitling process. Secondly, in my research, there is no clear separation between the researcher and the research object, as the findings are influenced by my knowledge, experience, and prejudices. Hence, I cannot reach a final truth because a study with other subtitlers, in other settings, or by another researcher may result in other findings; but I can show some tendencies which can then be further investigated. This is known as the hermeneutic circle (Kinsella, 2006; Langergaard et al., 2008; Holm, 2011) according to which a researcher can always dig deeper into a subject, ask more questions and become wiser.

Nevertheless, fundamental ideas of the natural sciences also guide my research process: quantifiable data and objectivity (Chalmers, 1999; Holm, 2011). On the one hand, quantitative methods are used in sub-study 1 by means of a questionnaire. On the other hand, in sub-study 2, ecological validity (see section 3.4) is an important factor. In striving for ecological validity, a certain degree of
separation between the researcher and the research object is desirable, in order to reduce the influence on the naturalness of the subtitling process to a minimum.

3.2 The mixed methods study
The research question (see chapter 1) naturally divides the mixed methods study into two sub-studies:

- Sub-study 1: The external subtitling process
- Sub-study 2: The internal subtitling process

The two sub-studies comprising the project will be carried out according to the pragmatic approach as advocated by Morgan (2007) which makes it possible to use mixed methods, i.e. quantitative and qualitative methods, in the same project (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Williams & Chesterman, 2007; Flick, 2009; Teddie & Tashakkori, 2009; Schmeltz, 2012). Studies within TS are often carried out applying this methodology (Nisbeth Jensen, 2013). The methodology is inspired by Creswell’s multiphase mixed methods (2013), as the findings of sub-study 1, a questionnaire, will feed into sub-study 2, a case study, by providing information of the persons working with subtitles in Denmark and their working conditions and workflow. On the basis of the knowledge gained from the analysis of this data, it can be examined if the external subtitling process has an influence on the internal subtitling process, and vice versa. Consequently, the sub-studies are linked, although different methods are applied. Triangulating the data ensures more valid data than the use of only one method (Mathison, 1988; Heine, 2010). Within a TPR frame, the advantage of triangulation is confirmed by Muñoz Martín (2014, p. 63): “Retrospective data cannot be taken as sole evidence for cognitive processes or strategy use, but [...] it can yield interesting results when combined with other methods.”

3.3 Sub-study 1: Questionnaire examining the external subtitling process
The main scope of sub-study 1 is to get an impression of what characterizes Danish subtitlers, how their working conditions are, and how they work. In this part of the project, a questionnaire has been sent out to a large group of Danish subtitlers to collect data about their age, gender, education, experience, salary, time pressure, physical working environment etc. The questionnaire is mainly quantitative, but qualitatively evaluable open questions, e.g. about how the subtitlers perceive the status of their profession, are also included. The questionnaire was sent out via the newsletter and Facebook page of the Danish union for audiovisual translators, Forum for Billedmedieoversætttere (Forum for Audiovisual Translators) (Forum for Billedmedieoversættete, 2015), and two Facebook groups (Andersen & Rose, 2015; Axholt & Brincker, 2015) where audiovisual translators discuss translation problems and their work in general. The questionnaire was open for approximately one
month. At the closing of the questionnaire, 97 respondents had completed the questionnaire, whereas 19 respondents had answered some questions without completing the questionnaire. Although 19 respondents did not complete the questionnaire, I still include their answers in the analysis, since the answers are valid despite the lack of completion.

On the one hand, the questionnaire is developed on the basis of literature on questionnaires (Leung, 2001; Hansen et al., 2008) and on articles concerned with the working conditions and status of translators (albeit not subtitlers) (Dam & Zethsen, 2009b, 2009a; Katan, 2009; Dam & Zethsen, 2011; Öner, 2013). Going into depth with this literature is beyond the scope of this TP, but the literature was consulted in order to structure the question order and formulate the questions appropriately, and to be inspired by questions posed in other research about translators’ working conditions and status. The questionnaire was tested twice by a professional subtitler. In chapters 4 and 5, the preliminary findings of sub-study 1 are described.

3.4 Sub-study 2: Case study examining the internal subtitling process
Investigation of a contemporary phenomenon (a case) within its real-world context characterizes case studies (Yin, 2014). Similarly, Saldanha and O’Brien (2013) call case studies context-oriented and describe how these can investigate e.g. translation products, individual translators, translation agencies, or, as is the case in this project, a process. Moreover, case studies can entail both quantitative and qualitative data. A case study was chosen for this research approach because it comprises the variety of methods used in TPR and therefore also in this research approach. It can be argued that it is not possible to build a general subtitling process model on the basis of a single case study, but case studies are in fact generalizable (Gomm et al., 2000; Flyvbjerg, 2010).

The vast majority of TPR consists of experiments rather than field studies (Christensen, 2011; Ehrensberger-Dow, 2014). I have chosen to carry out a field study to fill this gap. 3-5 Danish subtitlers who translate from English into Danish will participate in the field study. The participants come from two different Danish subtitling agencies: Dansk Video Tekst (2015) and Subline (2015b). In the field study, I will use observation (take field notes) and screen recording to record what the subtitlers are doing in their subtitling process, and carry out cue-based retrospective interviews in direct connection to the subtitling process. Carrying out sub-study 2 in the natural setting of a daily work routine can be seen as reducing the risk of affecting the subtitling process, thereby ensuring a high ecological validity, which is defined as “the naturalness of the investigated processes” (Hansen, 2013, p. 89). I am aware that I do affect the processes by sitting behind or next to them for observation, but the methods used in this sub-study, screen capture and observation, seem to be the least invasive methods available.
Consequently, the data generated in sub-study 2 are field notes, screen recording data, product data, and interview data, all of which will be coded and analyzed qualitatively with NVivo (QSR International, 2015). The data in sub-study 2 have not yet been collected, but a pilot study has been conducted to test the methods; not only to test the screen recording software, but also to experience being an interviewer, and to see if the prepared interview guide was appropriate. The preliminary findings of the pilot study are presented in chapter 6.

3.4.1 Observation
Observation derives from ethnography where researchers “[study] people within their own cultural environment through intensive fieldwork” (Singer, 2009, p. 191). Researchers working with ethnography “believe that people create meaning about their own worlds in their everyday activities” (Ladner, 2014, pp. 23-24). Taking participants out of their usual working environment decreases the ecological validity significantly and also raises the question whether the research does indeed reflect what goes on when the subtitlers work. In an experiment, subtitlers might not behave naturally which would yield data that would not be an accurate reflection of reality. Therefore, a field study has been chosen rather than an experiment.

3.4.2 Screen recording
Screen recording saves the subtitling process, i.e. what happens on the subtitlers’ screens, as a video file (Krings, 2005; Göpferich, 2008; Christensen, 2011). The screen recording software Camtasia (TechSmith, 2015) will be used to record the subtitling process on the screen unobtrusively in the background (Krings, 2005; Göpferich, 2008). Another advantage of screen recording is that the video file generated during the subtitling process can be replayed directly after the subtitling process and thereby serve as a cue in the retrospective interview that follows directly after the subtitling process.

3.4.3 Cue-based retrospective interview
In cue-based retrospective interviews, participants “give verbal reports of their own cognitive processes after having performed a given task” (Englund Dimitrova & Tiselius, 2014, p. 179). This interview method is only to be regarded as retrospective if “the probed task was recent and short” (Englund Dimitrova & Tiselius, 2014, p. 179) which means that the time spam between the translation process and the interview must be as short as possible.

A clear advantage of this method is that it does not interfere with the internal translation process (Christensen, 2011) as is the case with TAPs. A disadvantage is that the participant is likely to forget many of the decisions he or she just made in the internal translation process because much of what happens in the process is not stored in the long-term memory and disappears from the short-term memory, which has a capacity of 15-20 seconds (Christensen, 2011). Therefore, the use of a cue – in
this case the video file generated by Camtasia – is a helpful tool to aid the participant in recalling his thoughts and decisions in the internal subtitling process. This reduces the risk of the participants “infer[ing] what they must have thought or construct[ing] new explanations” (Christensen, 2011, p. 145). Hence, although having the help of the screen capture software, it is crucial that the cue-based retrospective interview takes place immediately after the subtitling process, as “[t]he risk of forgetting, distorting and incomplete data increases proportionally to the length of the interval between the task and the retrospective report” (Hansen, 2013, p. 90).

4. Focus point 1: Findings of sub-study 1 (external process – the subtitling task)
This and the next two chapters should not be seen as focus points of the PhD thesis in general, but focus points for the work progress; a kind of ‘state-of-affairs’ of my current work. In this chapter, some of the most interesting findings of my questionnaire will be presented under the following headlines: conditions of employment, the organization of the subtitling task, the subtitling workflow, and general information about the subtitlers.

Conditions of employment

- The vast majority of Danish subtitlers are hired as freelancers, namely 95 %.
- 61 % of the respondents have another job besides subtitling. Many of them work with language related tasks such as teaching or other forms of translation, but some work with music, TV production, IT, and even yoga.
- 61 % of the respondents who have another job besides subtitling regard subtitling as their primary job, whereas 23 % do not and 16 % do not know.
- 96 % of the respondents translate from English into Danish. 45 % subtitle for the hard of hearing in Danish. Many subtitlers also translate from Norwegian (32 %) and Swedish (37 %). 23 % of the respondents translate from Danish into a foreign language. A small part of the respondents (5 %) translate from exotic languages such as Japanese and Arabic.

The organization of the subtitling task

- As regards the software used by the subtitlers, 42 % use it for free via the subtitling agency, whereas 42 % have bought it themselves, and 14 % lease it through the agency.
- The job as a subtitler is highly flexible; 64 % mostly work from home whereas 28 % work at the office of the subtitling agency or at a shared office.

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3 In Denmark, the subtitlers primarily use the subtitling software Titlevision Sub Machine (Søndergaard, 2015).
• 67% of the subtitlers who mostly work at the office of their agency sit in an open-plan office. 13% sit in rooms for two to three persons, and 13% of them sit in an office for one person.

• When receiving a subtitling task, the subtitlers get information about deadline, customer (i.e. broadcasting company), type (e.g. movie, documentary, series), length, and language combination. Few subtitlers get information about the viewers and a glossary.

The subtitling workflow

• 87% of the respondents state that they always or often receive a manuscript with the subtitling task.

• The majority of the subtitlers work between 25 and 45 hours with subtitling per week.

• Most of the subtitlers can translate an average of 20 to 30 minutes of source text material per day.

• The most often used aids in the subtitling process are electronic dictionaries and online search engines.

• 45% of the respondents cue\(^4\) the subtitles gradually while they translate, whereas some (13%) cue before translating and others (16%) cue after having finished the translation. Some (9%) receive the material pre-cued which means that they do not need to cue it, but they may need to change the cueing in some places.

• The subtitlers themselves ensure the quality of their translations mainly by means of proofreading (94%), kontrollkørsel\(^5\) (88%), and the use of the agency’s internal guidelines for subtitling (88%). 48% use glossaries and 14% use research literature on subtitling. None of the respondents state that they do not in some way ensure the quality. It is interesting that only few subtitlers state that they receive a glossary with the subtitling task, and yet 48% of the subtitlers state that they make use of a glossary to ensure the quality of their subtitles.

• The subtitling agencies ensure the quality in their translations mainly by means of proofreading (84%), kontrollkørsel (55%), and the use of the agency’s internal guidelines for subtitling (60%). Glossaries and research literature are only used to a small degree (35% and 11%, respectively). Interestingly, 7% of the subtitlers state that their agency does not have a process to ensure quality, and 9% state that they do not know how their agency ensures quality.

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\(^4\) See footnote 1.

\(^5\) Kontrollkørsel = viewing and reviewing the source text material with the target text (the subtitles). Kontrollkørsel is not to be confused with proof reading, as proof reading only takes the subtitles, not the audiovisual material, into account (Subline, 2015a).
General information about the subtitlers

- The vast majority of the respondents are between 31 and 60 years old.
- 61% of the respondents are women; 36% are men.
- 64% of the subtitlers have a university degree (three to seven years of study). 31% have an education of a shorter duration than this.
- The respondents were asked to state their education in their own words. Many of them are educated within languages (teachers, interpreters, translators) and media, but other educational backgrounds in the sample include an architect, a yoga teacher, an actor, a journalist, a political scientist, and a law graduate. This shows that a degree in languages is not a requirement to become a subtitler.
- 62% stated that they make use of their education to a large and very large extent. However, 27% chose the option “neutral”, and 11% stated that they make use of their education to a small or very small extent. Respondents who answered neutral or to a small or very small extent may have educations which do not relate directly to the subtitling profession.

Through sub-study 1, the following valuable insights were gained into the subtitling industry in Denmark. These insights inform sub-study 2 (see section 3.2), e.g. in the following ways:

- Asking the subtitlers about their cueing process in the questionnaire renders an impression of how most subtitlers carry out this part of the subtitling process. This makes it possible to enquire into cueing as a strategy in the subtitling process, because it is evident via the questionnaire that subtitlers cue the subtitles differently; either before, during or after the transfer of the oral source text into the written target text.
- The questionnaire questions about quality in subtitles can be addressed in the interviews. As the results of the questionnaire show that 88% of the subtitlers use internal guidelines on subtitling, questions can be posed as to whether (and if so, how) the subtitler uses the agency’s internal guidelines, and how these have an influence on the processes and decisions made.
- Information from the questionnaire about the aids (dictionaries etc.) can be used to ask about which aids the participant uses and how these have an influence on the processes and decisions made.

To sum up, the participants in sub-study 2 can elaborate on some of the findings of sub-study 1 on the basis of their subtitling processes and verify or disprove the findings of sub-study 1: Do the subtitlers really almost always complete a kontrolkørsel? Do they receive information about the viewers, even though most of the respondents state that they do not? How do the participants include the expectations of their target audience in their subtitling process? Hence, sub-study 1 and
sub-study 2 are closely linked in that they provide information about how the external and the internal processes affect each other.

5. Focus point 2: Findings of sub-study 1 (external process – status)
The questionnaire entails a section concerning the status (Dam & Zethsen, 2009b) of the subtitling profession which comprises four questions: a scaled question and three open questions. In the following, the most interesting findings are described followed by an elaboration on why it is interesting to look into this issue and how it is connected to sub-study 2.

The first question is scaled and reads: I believe that people outside the subtitling craft respect the subtitling craft to the following extent. 17 % found the craft to be respected to a very high or a high extent, 35 % chose the neutral answer, and 46 % believe that the subtitling craft is respected to a low or very low extent.

From the open question In your opinion, which factors have an impact on the respect for the subtitling craft of people outside the craft?, I have extracted some general themes.

Low respect
- The quality of the subtitles is often low.
- The wages are low (especially at certain agencies not mentioned explicitly).
- People outside the craft do not have enough knowledge about the challenges of the craft, for instance about the restrictions in time and space that subtitlers deal with in everything they translate.

High respect
- The name of the subtitler appears at the end of the program which means that many people get to know the subtitlers’ names.
- Subtitlers are highly skilled.
- Subtitlers have a large knowledge about many things because they learn a lot from the programs they translate.
- The subtitling industry is fun and interesting.

To the open question How would you describe the status of the subtitling profession from your own point of view?, respondents answered with positive and negative comments.
Positive comments

- Subtitling is a craft.
- Subtitling is ‘sexy’ because the tasks are interesting and because subtitlers need to have a broad as well as specialized knowledge.
- “I am very proud of my job.”
- “People are envious of my job as a subtitler.”

Negative comments

- Subtitling is an underestimated craft.
- Subtitling is underpaid.
- The subtitling craft deserves to be respected more.
- The subtitling industry is threatened because more and more agencies use machine translation and hire people who do not have the necessary skills to create good subtitles.
- Subtitling is an anonymous craft.

To the last status question *Give one or more examples of professions with the same status as the subtitling profession*, responses were: translators, copywriters, writers, language researchers, etc. There were also some who understood the question differently and answered: parking attendants, politicians, journalists, high school teachers, national football coach (“because everyone sits at home thinking they could do better”), football referees, nurses, etc. This question is formulated in an ambiguous way which was not the intention. Nonetheless, the results can still be used by dividing the question into two answer categories: The ones who stated jobs similar to subtitling, and the ones who stated jobs different from subtitling, but with some characteristics that make these professions enjoy the same degree of respect in society.

The findings of sub-study 1 can be used in the PhD thesis in general and in sub-study 2 in particular as follows. The status part of the questionnaire gives me important insight into the self-image of Danish subtitlers. Kiraly’s (1995, p. 101) model of the translation process implies that the translator’s ‘self-concept’ can be seen as influencing the translation process. Hence, the mixed methods study (in particular sub-study 2) cannot be completed without knowledge about how the subtitlers perceive their profession and how they believe that society perceives their profession. Similarly, Dollerup (2000, p. 145) suggests:

“The status accorded to translators in specific societies is a feature which has enormous repercussions on the quality of translation: It is of prime importance to the self-confidence of translators, to the trust in translators as well as in the messages they
transmit and, ultimately, to the societies whose messages they convey and consequently represent in the act of translating.”

Therefore, the status part of the questionnaire becomes an important tool for the retrospective interviews in sub-study 2, as the question of status presumably has an impact on the subtitling process; if a subtitler is aware that he has critical viewers who are not afraid to file a complaint because they think they are smarter than the subtitler, it can be assumed that he will do his best to avoid such a situation. The findings about the status and the audience/society will be included in sub-study 2 through questions about the audience before the subtitling process and during the retrospective interview in order to investigate whether the subtitlers have their audience’s and their own thoughts about the profession in the back of their minds while subtitling.

6. Focus point 3: Findings of sub-study 2 (internal process – pilot study)

Since the case study data will be collected in the fall of 2015, sub-study 2 cannot be qualified any further at this stage. However, a pilot study conducted in July 2015 with a female subtitler at Subline with 10 years of subtitling experience brought about the following preliminary results. The pilot study was conducted in order to test the different methods applied (see section 3.4) and consisted of the following steps which will also be the steps used in the collection of the case study data:

1. **Short dialogue about the task**

   The participant answered questions about the kind of material (series, film etc.), length, language combination, deadline, glossary, cueing, etc. of the subtitling task. This part was recorded via a dictaphone and a smartphone.

2. **Subtitling process**

   The participant subitled for approximately 30 minutes. This part was recorded via Camtasia (screen capture), and field notes were taken.

3. **Cue-based retrospective interview**

   The Camtasia file was used as cue for the interview. This part was recorded via a dictaphone and a smartphone.

The pilot study took place in the participant’s home, as she works from home just as much as she works in the office of the subtitling agency. Consequently, the ecological validity of the pilot study was high, although the participant mentioned that it was somewhat odd having a person sitting next
to her while she worked. After the subtitling process she noted that she had worked way more efficiently than she would have if a researcher had not sat next to her. This shows that the presence of a researcher observing and taking field notes does have a certain impact on the subtitling process.

Concerning the note taking during the subtitling process, no specific plan was laid out; notes were intuitively taken on what caught the attention during the process. Nevertheless, it would be good to have a structure developed on the basis of research literature (Spradley, 1980; Thagaard, 2004; Ladner, 2014) in order to take field notes in a more systematic manner. Regarding the Camtasia recording as a cue in the retrospective interviews, it may be necessary that the control of the pause/play button is with the researcher so that the interview can be controlled more. Furthermore, the interview guide needs to be revised to get the participant to talk less about the product and translation problems and solutions and more about the subtitling process (see chapter 7).

At this point of my research, I have not found any evidence of the internal process affecting the external process. This may be due to the lack of subtitlers’ ability to control the external factors which means that their internal processes have little effect on the external process. However, as only the pilot study of sub-study 2 has been conducted, this statement will most likely be subject to change later on in the project. Furthermore, some anticipated results of sub-study 2 include but are not limited to the following:

- External factors have an impact on the subtitling process – e.g. a subtitler working with a tight deadline employs other strategies than a subtitler working with a less tight deadline.
- The subtitlers employ different strategies which I will be able to name in the model, for instance search strategies, orientation strategies (e.g. in the manuscript), listening strategies, writing strategies, and cueing strategies.

7. Questions for discussion
In sub-study 2 – besides field notes, screen capture and interviews – the data also consist of translation products. According to Malmkjær (2000, p. 164), when researching translation, “it is not possible to separate absolutely the study of the translation product from the study of the translation process” and vice versa. In subtitling in particular, it is impossible to leave out the product, since the target text depends more or less 100 % on the source text, as the source text is part of the target text. However, I have not yet decided how to include the product in my analysis. In some process models (e.g. the writing process model by Flower and Hayes (1981) and the translation process model by Risku (1998)), the product is mentioned explicitly. This is also the case in the models by Kiraly (1995) and Höning (1995), but here, however, the target text is placed physically outside the
frame depicting the translation process. As Malmkjær (2000) says, it is impossible to separate the process absolutely from the product, which means that the product can play a secondary role in the analysis – but it cannot be ignored, since it is the result of the subtitling process. This leaves the question open on how the product can be incorporated in the analyses and subsequently in the model.

In relation to this, the participant in the pilot study tended to talk about specific elements of the product rather than about the process on a more general level. This may be due to the types of questions asked and the way the interview was guided. As a consequence, it will be necessary to phrase the questions differently, i.e. more towards the process aspects of the situation, to avoid detours to specific elements of the product. This ties in with the previous question: In the retrospective interviews, which role should the product play, and hence, how do I approach the strategies applied by subtitlers during the subtitling process on a more holistic and higher abstraction level, as microstrategic decisions are not the core interest of the research approach?

8. Moving on from here
The next project steps are as follows: Before the end of 2015, the case study data of sub-study 2 will be collected. Furthermore, the methodology of the thesis will be described in more detail, and the literature review will be expanded. Environmental change will follow in April 2016 in Hildesheim (supervised by Klaus Schubert) and Würzburg (supervised by Heike Jüngst). Schubert and Jüngst are experts within the fields of process research and AVT, respectively, which allows for important feedback on the two main areas of the PhD thesis. The three weeks in Hildesheim and Würzburg will be used for writing on the above mentioned chapters and analyzing the case study data. Hopefully, the second environmental change will take place in the fall of 2016 at the University College London under the supervision of AVT scholar Jorge Díaz Cintas. The teaching obligation will almost be fulfilled at the end of the current semester, and half of the required PhD courses have been accomplished in the first year. The third year will be devoted to writing the thesis.
## 9. PhD plan

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* Total teaching obligation: 600 hours*
References


CRITT. (2012). Translog-II. Retrieved from https://sites.google.com/site/centretranslationinnovation/translog-ii


