



Making room inside the doughnut: European audiovisual subtitling in non-hegemonic languages as an opportunity for global language justice



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ABSTRACT

Based on Suzanne Romaine's metaphor "making room inside the doughnut", the practice of audiovisual subtitling in non-hegemonic languages is proposed as a catalyst for cultural diversity and an antidote to the "flattening of cultural-linguistic diversity". That is why it is urgent to reorient the prevailing audiovisual consumption habits in Europe towards ways of consumption that guarantee the original integrity of the audiovisual work, through non-short-term educational and cultural policies, aimed at understanding European linguistic diversity, not as a series of barriers to overcome, but as opportunities for cultural diversity.

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1. Introduction

'Linguistic diversity lies at the crossroads of a critical pathway to sustainable and equitable development. As long as globalisation continues to drive growth by destroying the environment, all the while failing to live the bottom billion, future generations will also inherit a more impoverished and drastically less diverse world as the future we want is jeopardised by the flattening of cultural-linguistic diversity. Making room inside the doughnut for global language justice requires changing the normative framework on sustainable development so that linguistic diversity and multilingualism are included in the future we want' (Romaine, 2019: 57).

Few contemporary linguists have contributed more consistently and decisively to the defence of social multilingualism and linguistic diversity like Suzanne Romaine has. For more than four decades, the American linguist has been placing linguistic diversity as one of the fundamental pillars of sustainable and equitable development, before plundering approaches to the environment and culture which are committed to the "flattening of cultural-linguistic diversity".

Hence this article is aligned with the lucid iconic metaphor devised by Romaine ("making room inside the doughnut for global linguistic justice") to illustrate a certain hypothetical hole into which minority languages are thrown into. In the same way, Romaine identifies the hegemonic languages as an opulent donut, which despite being often presented as linguistically diverse, does not cease to stifle the growth of minority languages.

Note that we intentionally use the qualitative term "Minoritised Language", instead of the quantitative term "Minority Language", to refer to those vernacular languages that (regardless of the size of their population of speakers) are marginalised from normalised social use by the impetus of certain hegemonic languages and that, precisely for this reason, suffer from all kinds of prejudices, lack of prestige or even persecution of their population of speakers (López Gómez et al., 2015).

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Thus, under the name “Minoritised Languages”, we refer to those languages that are marginalised, or in danger of extinction, in areas as fundamental as education, the media, administration or in the legal field, compared to those other hegemonic languages whose use is prevalent in a certain area (Williams and Williams, 2016).

In the same way, the situation of “global linguistic injustice”, as analysed by Suzanne Romaine (2019), has become one of the main threats to the survival of the so-called (“Intangible Cultural Heritage” (hereinafter, ICH) or “Living Heritage”. A concept which is already incorporated into our daily heritage, although recently defined, which begins with the promulgation in the 2003 *Paris Convention* of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (hereinafter, Unesco) of the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*.

However, the historical significance of this text (Unesco, 2003), in which Unesco details the precise mechanisms for the preservation, respect, cooperation and awareness of this type of ICH at a local, national and international level, seems to have gone unnoticed for the field of Social and Legal Sciences (and, more specifically, for the research community in Communication Sciences).

A historical significance that has not gone unnoticed in the disciplinary field of Arts and Humanities: think, for example, of projects such as the digital Europeana repository,¹ which since the end of 2008, provides free access to more than 50 million digitised files contributed by the 27 member states of the European Union.

It is a situation that is paradoxical if we take into account that, in the context of culture i.e contemporary culture, there are few materialisations such as those generated by Communication Sciences in all its variants and formats that adapt more closely to those uses, practices, expressions, knowledge and techniques of intergenerational transfer, which define that ICH or “living heritage”. More specifically, article 2.1 of the Paris Convention (Unesco, 2003: 2) defines as ICH all cultural expressions and formats that:

- Encourage a feeling of identity and continuity within communities.
- Favour creativity and social well-being, and contribute to positive management of a natural and social environment, as well as the generation of wealth.
- Is incessantly recreated by the communities and groups, contributes to promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.

Taking the above into account, this work proposes three objectives:

1. In the first place and as a strategic objective, there is the intention of contributing to the positioning of the disciplinary area of Communication as a nodal and polarising element in the generation and safeguarding of *Europe's Intangible Cultural Heritage* (hereinafter, EU-ICH).
2. Secondly, and as a cultural objective, the intention is to contribute to a change in perception, at an institutional and citizen level: the transformation of pejorative “language barriers” into opportunities for the consolidation of the European Union as a multicultural and multilingual reality through the dissemination and consumption of its audiovisual culture in non-hegemonic languages (Pérez-Pereiro and Deogracias-Horrillo, 2021).
3. Thirdly, and as a case analysis, the intention is to place audiovisual subtitling as one of the cultural guarantors of the EU-ICH. Therefore, it is not by chance that we have chosen subtitling as our object of study, due to its proven ability to facilitate access to the original audiovisual work in the language in which it was conceived. (Romero-Fresco, 2016).

As it could not be any other way, in order to provide methodological rigour and institutional endorsement of the objectives just mentioned, this work is enquired in the results of the research “PROJECT TITLE REMOVED FOR BLIND REVIEW”, financed through a competitive public tender by the European Regional Development Fund and the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities (through its State Research Agency), identified by the reference number CSO2016- REFERENCE CODE REMOVED FOR BLIND REVIEW.

This research project, aimed at the design of a comprehensive communication policy regarding audiovisual subtitling in non-hegemonic European languages, had about twenty researchers assigned to eight European universities and coordinated by the University of Santiago de Compostela: Open University of Catalonia, Polytechnic School Tecnocampus Mataró-Maresme, University of the Basque Country, Université Paris 8, University of South Wales, University of Stirling and University of Vigo.

2. Intangible cultural heritage, minoritised languages and audiovisual subtitling in Europe

In 2001, the General Conference of Unesco sanctioned the *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* (Unesco, 2002). It is an audacious and pioneering text in international law that stands out for its vocation to promote and protect the cultural and linguistic heritage of any country against the action of third parties (Jinji and Tanaka, 2015: 3).

Two years later, as indicated in the previous section, Unesco (2003) assumes in its *Paris Convention* the commitment of preserving the ICH, ensuring its viability and optimising its potential for sustainable development: a heritage that is

¹ <https://www.europeana.eu/es>.

understood to be extraordinarily broad and diverse, including oral traditions, performing arts, festive rituals and events, traditional crafts, etc.

Likewise, the *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* (Unesco, 2002) indicates that, despite its vulnerability, the ICH has proven to be a crucial factor for the conservation of cultural diversity in the face of increasing globalisation.

At this point, we should refute one of the perennial stigmas that disqualify the ICH (at a planetary level, as the EU-ICH, at a European level) as an onerous and unavoidable waste. Or, in other words, despite its low or non-profitability, culture is often disqualified as something that must be protected for the good of the people through public subsidies with no return, that is to say, lost funds. On the contrary, it is enough to point out as an example (at a Spanish level) two aspects collected in the *Cultural statistics Yearbook*, prepared by the *Ministerio de Cultura y Deporte* (2020) in order to realise the potential generator of wealth in cultural industries:

1. In 2018, the cultural industries sector employed 690,300 people in Spain (mainly young people with higher academic training: 69.3%), through a network of 122,673 firms engaged in cultural activities (which represents 3.7% of the total number of firms that appear in the Central Directory of Firms of the National Institute of Statistics²), encouraging an average consumption of 682,5 Euros per household in cultural products and services.
2. Secondly, given the prejudice of non-refundable subsidies to the cultural sector, it could be argued that the balance of this sector is clearly positive if we take into account that, in exchange for its significant contribution to the GDP of 3.2%, the sector receives only 0.44% of public financing (0.06% from the Central Government, 0.10% from the Autonomous Administrations and 0.28% from the Local Administrations), of which a return of more than seven Euros for each Euro invested from the public funds can be deduced.

However, in such a profitable socio-cultural and economic context, would it be possible, strictly speaking, to give audiovisual subtitling (and, by extension, the audiovisual work which makes it more accessible) the EU-ICH brand? The answer is a resounding “yes”, and it is supported by three reasons:

1. The notion of “intercultural communicative competence” (ICC), as raised by Byram (1997) and updated by Yue (2019: 199), involves at the same time, two types of evolutionary competences: on the one hand, the competence that the person acquires in the earliest stages of their linguistic and cultural development. On the other hand, the competences that the person could develop in later life stages, during immersion in other diverse cultural and linguistic forms. The Byram model includes five elements: attitude, knowledge, interpreting and relating, discovery and interaction skills, and critical awareness (Yue, 2019: 199). We can conclude that the incorporation of the *Original Version Subtitled* (hereinafter, OVS) to audiovisual works is revealed as a facilitating resource for intercultural communication, in those cases in which the consumer lacks the language skills to access the *Original Version* (hereinafter, OV).
2. Subtitling is usually considered to be a functional process (almost mechanical if we think of automatic subtitling), which is implemented in the latest professional routines due to the complex process of creation and dissemination of audiovisual work. This could be considered as “added value” that could satisfy the demands of certain minority targets. Instead, subtitling should be considered as a creative and expressive process that is transversal to the entire value chain of the audiovisual industry. From the first stages of audiovisual ideation and production (designing convergent subtitles with visual aesthetics), similarly to the distribution and exhibition phases, in which the subtitles universalise the audiovisual work while preserving its original identity. Hence the institutional urgency to normalise audiovisual production and consumption in OVS. With what political instruments? Through direct subsidies for subtitling, instead of wasting them on subsidies for audiovisual dubbing. As Martín-Alegre (2005: 21) points out, not even the best audiovisual dubbing can guarantee the original essence of the dialogue as it was conceived.
3. Although the main objective of the OVS is the preservation of the cultural idiosyncrasy of the audiovisual work, its role as an educational resource should not be underestimated either. It is worth dwelling on Toury's (1995: 59) argument, regarding the potential of subtitling as a springboard towards linguistic immersion in foreign languages in a playful way.

Many authors have defended a directly proportional relationship between the practice of subtitling and the normalisation in the use of non-hegemonic languages. It is not an easy task since it involves multiple and varied historical, sociocultural, political, economic, geographical aspects, etc., as evidenced by the multiple transdisciplinary approaches that we have collected and systematised in another previous publication (Ledo-Andión et al., 2017).

An interesting fact is that the approach to this direct proportional relationship between the practice of subtitling and the normalisation on the use of non-hegemonic languages that, within the media ecosystem in general and the European one in particular, have not been addressed until recently. Think that the purpose of linguistic normalisation would not start in the European audiovisual field until well into the second half of the 20th century with the emergence and consolidation of the public radio and television entities (Herrerías, 2010: 11).

² <https://www.ine.es/dynt3/inebase/es/index.htm?padre=51&dh=1>.

In any case and despite the efforts of the European public channels, we must point out the persistence at present of a certain European weakness from the OVS and, therefore, of the normalisation on the use and consumption of minority languages in the audiovisual field.

An everlasting weakness that coincides with the warning formulated by Armand Mattelart (2001) and unfortunately in force for almost two decades, which shows the pathos of a Europe that eternally aspires to world audiovisual leadership as “a giant with feet of clay”, by allocating a pyrrhic of 1% of the global budget of its audiovisual productions for its promotion and distribution, in which the OVS plays a key role.

3. Material and method

As will be seen next, our disciplinary approach could be synthesised as a multi-stage methodology that, based on a multiple triangulation indebted to the tradition inaugurated by Denzin (2008), confronts the validity of normative and essay literature on the subject of subtitling with a range of in-depth interviews to elites or specialists and prospective Delphi questionnaires. The choice of the Delphi responds to the need noted by Sanz (2011) to provide prospective methodologies on cultural practices, since any political initiative only demonstrates its long-term efficacy or ineffectiveness, most of the time when it is too late to carry out strategic repositioning. Hence, the need to anticipate any events with due rigour.

All this was stated in five methodological phases, as will be detailed next:

The first phase of the project corresponded to the design of the conceptual framework of the study, beginning with the review of the essayistic, normative and professional literature at the European level. This documentary consultation allowed us to isolate, in the first place, the main elements of confluence between cinematography and linguistic diversity with a view to the preservation of the EU-ICH, especially in the case of non-hegemonic European languages, some of them in danger of extinction, as well as the specific territorial frameworks that we would have to consider in the next phase.

In this first phase of documentary analysis, aimed at the extraction of those topics that were to nourish the questionnaires of the in-depth interviews with elites or specialists, it was essential to establish a homogeneous criterion and analysis for the entire research team. To this end, we rely on previous experiences of our research group about inferential hermeneutics (Ledo-Andión and Castelló-Mayo, 2013: 76), in turn indebted to the contributions of Bardin (2013: 15–29) or Chevrier (2009: 53–87).

In the second phase of our project, and from the data obtained in the previous phase, it was possible to define up to 18 European cinematographic frameworks characterised by the use of non-hegemonic languages: Belgian, Catalan, Danish, Slovenian, Estonian, Basque, Finnish, Welsh, Galician, Irish, Icelandic, Latvian, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Sami and Swedish.

For practical purposes, in the financing area (MEDIA Subprogram), dubbing prevails over the OVS which is relegated to crowdsourcing models on participatory online platforms. However, Tessa Dwyer (2017, p. 24–25) introduces an interesting nuance, differentiating between those European countries with a higher incidence of audiovisual dubbing (defined with the acronym FIGS: France, Italy, Germany and Spain, flagship countries for their contribution to the volume of European audiovisual production), and those countries from Western Europe showing a prevalent incidence of subtitling, such as Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal and Sweden:

Various theories are put forth within Translation Studies to explain national screen translation preferences. The three most significant factors tend to be a country's economic wealth, the size of its language community and the 'health' of its national film industry based on import/export ratios. (Dwyer, 2017, p. 39).

We introduce this qualification since, although it is unquestionable that the aforementioned cinematographic demarcations share a common casuistry (having non-hegemonic languages and cultures), each territory must be analysed for its particular idiosyncrasy in the manner of those items defined by Dwyer (2017, p. 39).

Thus, once the 18 European cinematographic frameworks characterised by the use of non-hegemonic languages have been defined, we proceeded to analyse the commercial and institutional strategies (communication policies) in each of the territorial demarcations, assessing in each of them independently their activity to promote subtitling. Moreover, and taking advantage of the research work in this field, we also proceeded to identify and locate those indigenous specialists who (in each of their competence profiles: academic, institutional and professional) could best contrast the data derived from critical reviews of the texts and evaluate their degree of implementation and effectiveness in each of the 18 European film frameworks that use non-hegemonic languages.

The selected specialists were summoned to two international events, held in Santiago de Compostela (Galicia, Spain), in order to identify with them the main challenges and innovative European benchmarks in the application of subtitling initiatives and programmes:

- International Forum ‘Languages and Cinema. Indicators for a European subtitling programme’³ (21–22/05/2018).
- International Symposium ‘Languages and Cinema II. For a European subtitling programme in non-hegemonic languages’⁴ (12–13/12/2019).

³ <https://estudiosaudiovisuais.org/es/investigacion/foro-internacional-las-lenguas-y-el-cine-indicadores-para-un-programa-europeo-de-subtitulado/>.

⁴ <https://estudiosaudiovisuais.org/es/actividade/simposio-internacional-las-lenguas-y-el-cine-ii/>.

The third methodological phase of the project, focused on the analysis and taxonomisation of the most cutting-edge and current audiovisual translation and accessibility experiences. For its selection, analysis and classification, two inclusion and exclusion criteria were followed:

- Creative and integrative potential between the practice of subtitling, accessibility and integrity of cinematographic work (McClarty, 2012). At this point, it is necessary to clarify that our research project is not oriented to the study of subtitling as an accessibility tool for those with sensory disabilities, but to the study of the accessibility of those people who lack the language skills to access an audiovisual work without the support of subtitles. However, it is clear that the achievements in one of the fields (subtitling as an accessibility tool for people with sensory disabilities) redounds to the other and vice versa.
- Balance between the required linguistic quality (translating everything, even in its smallest details) and the very essence of audiovisual language, which imposes a scriptural laconism compared to the domain of kinetic images and original sounds. In this sense, an excessive prominence of subtitling on the screen would make it difficult (or even impossible) for the viewer's narrative identification with the audiovisual story. Interesting experiences such as 'partial subtitling' and 'pseudo-subtitling' (O'Sullivan, 2011: 176–203) were weighted due to their purpose of reconciling the heteroclitite nature of the alphanumeric characters, which appear and disappear on the screen, with the very essence of audiovisual language.

In this area, the contributions of GALMA (Galician Observatory for Media Access), a participant in the research project since its inception, and specifically of its Principal Investigator, Dr. Pablo Romero-Fresco (2019), were essential. Indeed, its contributions regarding translation, accessibility and the experience of visual consumption aimed at foreign audience or those with visual or hearing disabilities were extraordinarily valuable for the development and achievement of our research at an international level.

In the presence of those dynamics of translation and subtitling during the distribution stage of the audiovisual work, characterised by the precariousness of technical and economic means, Romero-Fresco (2019) proposes an alternative and innovative approach, which incorporates translation and accessibility right from the initial stage of cinematographic ideation through what he calls the "accessible cinema workflow": an interaction, on the one hand, between translators and accessibility specialists (combined in an emerging professional profile: the director of accessibility and translation), and on the other hand, filmmakers choosing as a case analysis the award-winning British documentary *Notes on Blindness*⁵, directed by Peter Middleton and James Spinney in 2016.

The fourth phase of our project was dedicated to the design and conduct of around thirty in-depth interviews to those indigenous specialists who had been located in the second phase (based in the 18 European film frameworks that use non-hegemonic languages) implementing for this the formats of interview guides recommended by Roulston and Choi (2018: 235–241).

In this sense, one of the self-imposed imperatives by the working group was to minimise, as far as possible, the risk of *self-fulfilling prophecy* (a term coined by the American sociologist Robert K. Merton in 1949) that could arise from the unconscious imposition of certain themes or approaches by the interviewing teams, at the expense of the spontaneity of the people interviewed (Martire, 2017).

Thus, after conducting some thirty in-depth interviews, the iteration of a series of topics and themes began to be detected. This recurring phenomenon made it possible to determine that it was already a representative and stable sample of concepts. In other words, the different topics pointed out by the interviewed experts (the qualitative phase) would constitute the corpus of topics to be dealt with in the Delphi panel of experts (the quantitative phase). Thus, when the challenges, problems, potentials, barriers, contexts, threats, etc., began to be repeated in different interviews, it was understood that we could consider that we had a stable and representative sample for its implementation in the Delphi phase. At that time, the group of interviewees was classified into seven major profiles, which in turn were grouped into three major categories of experts:

- a. Institutional Profile: including a population of experts with a proven capacity, both at an essay, academic and political level.
- b. Mixed Profile: experts in audiovisual management and criticism, as well as in the organisation of events and festivals.
- c. Professional Profile: experts in audiovisual creation and translation, dubbing and subtitling, as well as distributors and producers.

For better processing, coding and critical analysis, the content of the in-depth interviews was subjected to analysis by the qualitative software ATLAS.ti (acronym for *Archiv für Technik, Lebenswelt und Alltagssprache*, while the lowercase acronym "ti" refers to textual interpretation): a software which is massively used in qualitative research and designed within the TUB (Technische Universität Berlin⁶) between 1989 and 1992 (Legewie, 2014).

⁵ <http://www.notesonblindness.co.uk/>.

⁶ <https://www.tu.berlin/>.

In our case, the choice of ATLAS.ti is determined by its versatility when it comes to gathering in a “Hermeneutic Unit” (or general computer file with *.hpr7 extension) textual content, audios and static and kinetic images which adds an ideal georeferencing capacity to cover the 18 isolated European film frameworks in the second phase. Once the research is concluded, that “Hermeneutic Unit” (hereinafter, HU) with its content added (as well as the relational logic between them, which will be analysed next) was made available for any further qualitative exploration of interest in our project or other potential ones.

In accordance with the recommendations of Woolf and Silver (2017), we assume our qualitative analysis as a typically recursive process that, based on the reduction, interpretation and abstraction of the data, was able to develop substantive theoretical models, considering the following elements of the qualitative analysis process with ATLAS.ti:

- a. Primary Documents: the base material to be analysed included the full transcripts of the in-depth interviews, in various word processing extensions (*.txt, *.doc, *.rtf, *.pdf).
- b. Quotes: significant discursive sections which already at an iconic or textual level isolated both iterative semantic configurations such as time codes from audiovisual recordings or references to the frames defined in the second phase.
- c. Codes: basic units of analysis. In our study 71 codes were created and then distributed to 14 large families as we will detail below.
- d. Memos: annotations and apostilles derived from the qualitative analytical act that allowed us to venture inferences regarding the inclusion, exclusion and subsequent coding of topics (from the in-depth interview guides and the annotations from the interviewing teams), preventing undesirable deviations from the course of research (based on a synopsis of the strategy with the objectives of the project).
- e. Families: aggregations of elements that by sharing some peculiarity (whether they are primary documents, codes or annotations), allow the creation of homogeneous groupings of higher elaboration and abstraction, such as theoretical models.
- f. Links: the establishment of the links between the constituent elements of the study, as well as the relational logic between them (which largely depends on the potential for reduplication of the analysis), graphically representable in network views.
- g. Network views: infographic materialisation of the constituent elements and their links which allows to simplify the interpretation and abstraction processes of the study.

Regarding the “families” contemplated in our study, already at the level of primary documents, codes or annotations, up to 14 modalities were contemplated during the analytical process with ATLAS.ti: “Audio-Visual Translation”, “Dubbing”, “Viewer experience”, “Public financing”, “Hegemonic languages”, “Minoritised Languages”, “Economy and logistics”, “Language normalisation”, “Subtitling”, “Audiovisual typologies”, “Video On Demand”, “Thematic characterisations”, “Positive evaluations” and “Negative evaluations”.

The qualitative analysis developed with ATLAS.ti throughout the fourth phase was closed after having satisfied the fulfilment of its three proposed milestones:

1. The enrichment, revelation, refutation or clarification of the information from the essayistic, normative and professional literature which is collected and analysed in phase I of the project in order to rigorously delimit the antecedents and the status of the subtitling issue, as well as its relationship with hegemonic and non-hegemonic languages.
2. The extraction, systematisation and tabulation of those key topics and themes that should serve to configure a prospective Delphi questionnaire (to be developed in the next phase), in order to isolate the existing consensuses among the specialist members of the panel according to each of their competence profiles.
3. The selection of the optimal members to make up the Delphi panel of experts was based both on their profile (academic, professional, managerial and institutional) and on the competence and eloquence demonstrated during the in-depth interview phase directed at elites, as well as on the preceding phases that made up the research project.

Phase five of our study was devoted entirely to the Implementation of a Delphi methodology. Developed by Dalkey and Helmer (Rand Corporation⁷) in 1951, the Delphi method could be synthesised as a prospective and iterative analysis technique, aimed at obtaining the greatest possible consensus in the opinions expressed by a group of specialists (or “panel”) on a given topic.

The Delphi is, in addition, a systematic and evolutionary method that guarantees the anonymity of the members of the panel, in order to avoid possible conditioning or contamination, and whose objective aims at the description of present environments, as well as the prediction of future scenarios, as detailed by Jo Daniels (2017), based on the implementation on a practical case.

As mentioned in the previous phase, the questionnaires that were to be submitted to the consensus of the panel of specialists were created based on the themes and topics extracted in the previous phase. However, in this phase the project

⁷ <https://www.rand.org/>.

nomenclator (with all its implicit and explicit connotations) to be incorporated into the Delphi questionnaire was revised again, in order to avoid an unconscious modulation of the responses by the panel of specialists, motivated by their favourable positions or contrary with respect to the names used.

Observing, therefore, the appropriate methodological precautions, we proceeded to design successive drafts until a pilot test or beta test was obtained which was composed of 55 questions that were grouped into five large thematic blocks:

1. Demand for film productions in non-hegemonic languages and programmes to support creation and dissemination.
2. Dubbing, subtitling and preservation of European linguistic diversity.
3. Subtitled from/to non-hegemonic languages.
4. Other forms of distribution of audiovisual content in non-hegemonic languages.
5. The situation of translation and subtitling in non-hegemonic languages.

Following the Delphi methodology, the pilot test of the questionnaire would have to demonstrate the operability of its design and content, as well as the usability of the computer tool that served as support and also evidencing the need for clarifications in the writing, the elimination of irrelevant questions or the inclusion of those categorisations that have not been considered in the first rounds of questions.

In fact, although the Delphi methodology is generally recognised for its potential for quantifying consensus in expert panels, this should not imply a summary dismissal of dissent, which often offers useful and relevant information. Therefore, from the very conception of the questionnaire in the “alpha tests”, we tried to maintain those exploratory margins that would allow us to provide information that, without having been contemplated in previous phases, would reveal any further interest for the investigation.

Regarding the articulation of the questionnaire, although open questions were also asked, the majority opted for ordinal categorical questions, which based on Likert scales, allowed an assessment of the degree of agreement or disagreement in relation to a series of statements. Through this scale, it was possible to obtain versatile information, analysable in comparative terms as a pure numerical variable, and which, at the same time, provided first-level hierarchical information.

4. Preliminary research results

The Delphi pilot test obtained a total of 91 answered questionnaires, the information of which facilitated an important reformulation of the standard questionnaires for the following phases, mainly in those questions that, due to their wording or the articulation of their scales, could have been confusing. At the same time, the information provided by the pilot test allowed us to further assess the selection of the most competent specialist sources, in order to integrate the nuclear panel of our study.

Once the questionnaire had been consolidated and the panel was limited to 49 specialists (with an average age of 49.09 years and gender equality), two waves of surveys were sent, with the aim of achieving the greatest possible unanimity in the responses of the expert population: thus, the quality of the results tabulated from the last wave allowed the decision to suspend subsequent remissions of the questionnaire, reaching a degree of consensus among specialists $C < 0.2$.

The content of the questionnaires was incorporated into a database and subjected to an exhaustive analysis using the *Statistical Package for Social Sciences* (SPSS Statistics 24): the choice of this powerful IBM software is justified by its ability to manage large amounts of data and its high number of analytical possibilities, both descriptive and multivariate, as well as its potential for calculating the coefficient of variation for each question.

Before entering into strictly quantitative evaluations, it is worth mentioning that the information obtained throughout the five phases of the process was of high quality, meaning not only that information was ideal for evaluating the different aspects contemplated in the project’s nomenclator, but also for those other aspects that, having not been considered initially, encouraged the exploration of alternative themes and the formulation of alternative hypotheses.

On the other hand, thanks to the very design of the Delphi questionnaire, in which (as the culmination of a long heuristic process) blocks of exploratory and descriptive questions were integrated, a large amount of information was obtained and classified into two types:

- Descriptive, analytical and systematic of the current state (essayistic, normative, professional, economic, aesthetic, industrial, etc.) to be established around the subject of subtitling.
- Prospective and predictive of certain trends that, in the medium and long term, could venture into communication policies, possible modifications in the consumption habits of certain age ranges, etc.

In addition to the design of the questionnaire, another aspect that guarantees the validity of Delphi, as an effective and reduplicable method, is the choice of the panel of specialists, understood as an effective integration of competencies capable of venturing trends.

In order to determine the consensus of the evaluations and the relevance of each item in the consultation with the panel of specialists, the coefficients of variation and content validation V of Aiken (1980: 131) were used respectively:

- a. Consensus: for this purpose, the Variation coefficient was used to determine the consensus in the expert evaluations $C = s\bar{x}$, where \bar{x} is the average of the evaluations given by the judges and s is the standard deviation. A value close to 0 indicates that the evaluations are homogeneous, which supports the consensus among the evaluators. Its use in the validation of questionnaires in the Delphi method is common which guarantees the degree of consensus among experts. The reference value in literature is usually 0.2 (although higher values are usually taken in initial phases or exploratory studies). Thus, the criterion used for consensus among experts was $C < 0.2$ which determined the number and nature of the conclusions collected in the last section of this work.
- b. Relevance: for this purpose, the coefficient of Aiken (1980) or of Content Validity or Content Relevance ($V = \bar{x} - \text{MinMa}\bar{x} - \text{Min}$) were employed, where \bar{x} is the average of the scores given by the judges and, Max and Min are respectively the maximum and minimum values of the scale. This coefficient varies between 0 and 1. The 0 indicates that all the experts integrated in the panel have shown little relevance with respect to the item, while 1 indicates the opposite. In this sense, the criterion used for the relevance of the item was the one-sided contrast $V = 0.7$.

Finally, this second phase did not only allow a measurement of the consensus of the panel, but it also verified its stability over time, assessed to what extent each consensus was or was not consistent for each of the institutional or professional profiles contemplated and systematised those reasons that could explain the emergence and evolution of possible dissensions. For this, two complementary validation techniques were used:

Technique 1: Relationship between categorical variables:

- 1.1. Tabulation, through a cross table analysis of the relationship between the responses and the profiles of specialists participating in the panel.
- 1.2. Consideration of the statistic “Chi/Chi-square” (χ^2), although the limited number of cases prevented the establishment, in general, of consistent relationships.

Technique 2: contrast of arithmetic averages:

- 2.1. Verification of whether, indeed, the arithmetic average obtained by certain profiles of specialists participating in the panel differed from others.
- 2.2. If different, establish whether the disagreements were driven by panel profiles, a thematic bias, or due to any other reasons.

5. Discussion and conclusions

The research that is the object of this article, allowed us to systematise important conclusions, based on a weighting between the degrees of consensus and existing discrepancy among specialists on the variety of proposed topics of which the most significant were:

Conclusions regarding thematic block 1 (degree of consensus < 0.2): “Demand for cinematographic productions in non-hegemonic languages and programmes to support creation and dissemination”:

- 1.1. The reorientation of current consumption habits towards ways that guarantee the original integrity of the audiovisual work can only come from the hand of non-short-term educational and cultural policies.
- 1.2. The OVS is the best antidote against the linguistic disintegration of the original audiovisual work, which is inevitable during the increasingly intense course of transnational commercial exploitation.
- 1.3. Neither the OVS (nor obviously the OV) imply a tax on the exhibiting business, as they are formats that are fully compatible with the cinematic exhibition rooms resulting from the digitisation process.

Conclusions regarding thematic block 2 (degree of consensus < 0.2): “Dubbing, subtitling and preservation of European linguistic diversity”:

- 2.1. Although the contrary is generally argued, the economic and logistical costs of dubbing are ten times the production costs of the OVS.
- 2.2. Unlike dubbing, the OVS does not violate the original integrity of the audiovisual work, being the best option for the preservation of the EU- ICH.

Conclusions regarding thematic block 3: “Subtitling from/to non-hegemonic languages” (degree of consensus < 0.2):

- 3.1. The OVS is the option that (in situations of language incompetence) best guarantees European linguistic and cultural pluralism.
- 3.2. It is necessary to change the perception of European linguistic diversity as barriers, rather than opportunities for cultural diversity.

- 3.3. Accessibility and integration will be concepts to vindicate in the medium and long term: not only the integration of languages and cultures, but also those sensory disabilities handled by the OVS.

Conclusions regarding thematic block 4 (degree of consensus <0.2): “Other forms of distribution of audiovisual content in non-hegemonic languages”:

- 4.1 It is necessary to break the vicious circle that justifies the low production of films in minority languages due to the fact that it does not reach a wide audience to guarantee returns on investment.
 4.2 The tendency for European films in non-hegemonic languages to be shown mainly in their country of origin must be changed.
 4.3 The immediate future points to a diversification of the exploitation and dissemination niches, aimed at younger targets, which will replace the current monopolistic and precarious audiovisual distribution network.

Conclusions regarding thematic block 5 (degree of consensus <0.2): “Situation of translation and subtitling in non-hegemonic languages”:

- 5.1. The trend points to the establishment of a loop, in which the standardisation of the OVS favours a European polyglot, and this, in turn, facilitates the consumption of audiovisual works in OV and OVS.
 5.2. It is the duty of the Council of Europe (as a supra-state entity) to redefine the nationality of the audiovisual work, linked to the original linguistic choice of its ideation and production.
 5.3. The coordinated action of communication policies will demonstrate the close relationship between the promotion of the OVS and the linguistic normalising process, as well as other educational and socio-cultural effects.

On the other hand, and at a methodological level, we trust that we have sufficiently demonstrated the validity of our methodological model for the analysis of other cultural productions which could be ascribed to the general denomination of “EU- ICH”. This is carried out through a system developed in five phases, as well as the combined use of computer science associated with the last two, based on a combination of SPSS software and Atlas.ti: a methodological model or operating procedure that we offer to the Linguistics and Communication research community, as well as in its disciplinary areas of intersection, which could be understood to be useful for the analysis of any other cultural casuistry that makes up the EU-ICH.

It should also be noted that, based on the subtitling and accessibility recommendations derived from the project, its research group and the GALMA Group of the University of Vigo are developing a protocol to improve the quality of subtitling of films in the Galician language which is susceptible of being extrapolated to other cinematographies in non-hegemonic languages.

As external validations of the results obtained, we must point out that the research project obtained the highest qualification by the evaluators of the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities (through its State Research Agency) as well as the endorsement of the promotional European seal “EYCH 2018” (“European Year of Cultural Heritage”⁸), granted by the European Parliament and the Council of the EU; art. 2: UE 2017/864).

To conclude, we must point out as main limitations of our study, certain difficulties noted regarding the extrapolation of its results to other areas of an interactive or immersive nature (such as in the case of video games) in which the reading of subtitles could condition the high demands of sensory reaction and psychomotor response capacity to a myriad of visual and auditory stimuli in real time as described by Díaz-Montón (2011) and Méndez-González (2015).

A limitation that, however, we intend to address in future research projects, due to the growing importance of the video game market (which, until now, has mostly opted for dubbing), in terms of its business volume as well as its influence on the younger age ranges and not only regarding the transfer of sociocultural roles, but also regarding the influence of certain cultural products in the normalisation of the use of certain hegemonic languages at the expense of other Minoritised Languages.

In any case, we trust that our contribution will join many others that defend linguistic diversity as one of the fundamental pillars of sustainable and equitable development.

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