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A model of subtitling training in university education

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Abstract

The aim of the paper is to propose a model of subtitling training in the university education of future subtitlers in the study programmes French Language and Culture and German Language and Culture. The authors briefly define the tradition of training in audiovisual translation (AVT) in Slovakia (Perez, 2017; Paulínyová & Perez, 2018) compared to the international development of training in AVT (Díaz-Cintas, 2008), including the presentation of the French and German courses on audiovisual translation currently proposed at the Department of Translation Studies at Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Slovakia. The proposed model is based on the constructivist concept emphasizing the principles of cooperation, interaction, and social learning (Mraček, 2015; Mračková Vavroušová, 2017; Kiraly, 2000), while using simulated translation (subtitling) assignments which seem to be an effective tool in the training of future subtitlers in accordance with the needs and requirements of the real translation market. Authors describe individual phases of teaching subtitling which they applied in the French and German courses on audiovisual translation, and subsequently evaluate the quality of student subtitles by analysing their error rate according to the FAR model (Pedersen, 2017). The presented model can serve as a didactic tool applicable in teaching other types of translation as well (dubbing, literary translation, specialized translation etc).

Key words: subtitling, model of training, constructivism, FAR model.

1 Tradition of training in audiovisual translation in Slovakia

According to Díaz-Cintas, training in audiovisual translation (AVT) has been part of the curricula of some universities for several decades. This training was conducted both through mandatory and optional modules either at the bachelor's or master's degree study programmes. However, the real boom of the didactics of audiovisual translation can be traced back to the first decade of the 21st century (Díaz-Cintas, 2008, p. 4).

In Slovakia, the development of training in AVT started about one decade later. The first separate course on audiovisual translation was introduced by Janecová (Perez) to the translation studies curriculum at the Department of Translation Studies at Constantine the Philosopher University (CPU) in Nitra in the academic year 2011/2012. Nitra can therefore be considered not only the birthplace of translation studies in Slovakia thanks to the Nitra School of Translation, but also the birthplace of academic training in AVT.

Nowadays, training in AVT is provided within the programmes of translation studies at several universities. Besides the CPU, it is provided at the following Slovak universities: Comenius University (at the Department of English studies since the academic year 2012/2013 and the Department of Romance studies since the year 2015/2016); University of Matej Bel in Banská Bystrica (at the Department of Romance studies since the academic year 2011/2012 and later at the Department of English studies); University of Prešov (since the academic year 2015/2016) and University of Pavol Jozef Šafárik in Košice (until the academic year 2014/2015 within the course Translation of documentary texts) (Paulínyová & Perez, 2018, pp. 180-183).

In Slovakia, besides the recent increase in training in AVT, we have also witnessed an increase in demand for audiovisual translators, and more specifically subtitlers, from

various foreign languages into Slovak. In the past years, students of the Department of Translation Studies in Nitra have been subtitling audiovisual works for film festivals, language institutes (e.g. the French Institute in Slovakia) and other organisations, but also direct customers on regular basis. The increasing amount of training in AVT therefore seems justified and meets the needs and requirements of the real audiovisual translation market. The question that arises is in what way training in AVT (in all the provided language combinations) can be incorporated into the university programmes of translation studies in the most effective way to meet these market needs.

2 Training in AVT within the study programmes with French and German

First of all, we would like to stress that when we speak of training in AVT in Slovakia, English is the predominant language. Training in AVT from another foreign language (German, French, Russian or Spanish) into Slovak is still represented to a much lesser extent. This paper presents courses on AVT from the French and German language which are currently available at the Department of Translation Studies in Nitra and their possible enlargement or improvement in the future.

2.1 The study programme French language and culture

The course *Translation of audiovisual texts 1 (French language)* is an integral part of the curriculum of the study programme French Language and Culture. It is an elective course that is offered to masters' degree students in the final year of their studies during the winter semester. Even though it is an optional module, students usually opt for it since, in recent years, audiovisual translation has especially gained increased attention and students of translation studies find it very appealing. In the academic year 2020/2021, all of the final year students of the study programme French Language and Culture and one student from the Department of Romance studies attended the course.

At present, the course is designed to solely teach subtitling as a specific form of audiovisual translation, that's why only subtitling will be addressed in this paper. Hopefully, in the future dubbing will also be included in the course. Throughout the semester, students worked with various audiovisual works of different genres and themes. In the first half of the semester, students subtitled selected French short movies (15 to 30 minutes) for the online movie platform of the French institute IFcinema. It is a platform that is not freely accessible to the general public. We have been granted access only for didactic purposes. Overall, students translated 5 short films (*Avant que de tout perdre*, *Plein Ouest*, *Les filles*, *Diversions*, *Le mystère Henri Pick*). They viewed the films on the platform IFcinema with French subtitles and were also provided with srt. files that contained already timed French subtitles. Students' task was to translate subtitles to the above-mentioned films into Slovak. The French film analysed in this paper is *Avant que de tout perdre* which describes a day in the life of a woman who decides to leave her violent husband.

In the second half of the semester, students created Slovak subtitles to the selected French talks on the TED platform. There was not only a shift from the audiovisual works' genre (from short films to talks), but students also got to work with the online subtitling software Amara (TED is currently transitioning to a new subtitling software).

2.2 The study programme German language and culture

As to the study program German Language and Culture, students become acquainted with audiovisual translation within the course *Translation of utility texts (German language)*. The course is integrated into the group of elective courses in the first year of master's studies in the summer semester.

Within the course *Translation of utility texts* (German language), a part of classes is devoted to teaching subtitling. After a basic introduction of the specifics of the interlingual subtitling, including technical parameters of subtitles and work with subtitling software, students work on a real translation assignment - subtitling a short documentary dealing with the issue of the World War II survivors. The main protagonist Lothar Knessl describes the division of the family and the events of World War II, which marked him for life. The original language of the audiovisual work is German, the audio track consists of an expressive monologue of the main protagonist and the video track is complemented by authentic period photographs.

Based on the requirements of the current translation practice and translation market, there is a growing demand for professionally trained audiovisual translators also from German into Slovak. Therefore, in the future, we would like to enrich the offer of courses in the given language by a separate *Course on audiovisual translation* from the German linguistic and cultural background to provide students with a sufficient theoretical basis and create space for the development of practical skills in the field of subtitling or dubbing from German into Slovak through simulations of real situations and work on real translation assignments.

3 Constructivist concept in subtitling training

Project-based learning and simulated translation assignments (or work on real translation orders) represent nowadays up-to-date activating teaching methods applicable especially in practically oriented (translation or interpreting) courses at various levels of university studies. When applying these methods, students (i.e. future translators) are confronted with the requirements of, so to speak, real translation practice and real translation market. Therefore, making use of these methods in the teaching process seems particularly justified. At present, innovative didactic concepts that take into account new aspects of the teaching process are used (not only) in higher education. One of the most important of these concepts is constructivism. The theory of constructivism belongs among the most relevant (psycho)didactic theories emphasizing the active and social aspect of education (Kosíková, 2011). Constructivist concepts, in a sense, transcend classical teaching, which focuses on the traditional transmission of knowledge from the teacher to students in its final (definitive) form (Uherová, Horňáková, 2018, s. 94). In constructivism, the main actors in the teaching process are students, taking into account their previous knowledge, assumptions and attitudes. Students integrate all newly acquired knowledge into the already existing knowledge structures, which are constantly renewed. At the same time, the teacher acts primarily as a coach, a tutor or a facilitator. The constructivist form of teaching emphasizes the principle of cooperation and the social dimension of learning, including interaction and discussion (Mračková Vavroušová, 2017, pp. 118-119). We apply this concept in a slightly modified form to subtitling training in the framework of simulated translation assignments focusing on subtitling short films from French and German into Slovak.

For instance, Kiraly doesn't use the term constructivist concept (or approach), but *the social constructivist approach* which is based on the idea that "individuals have no choice but to create or construct meanings and knowledge through participation in the interpersonal, intersubjective interaction that the philosopher Richard Rorty has called 'the conversation of mankind'" (Kiraly, 2000, p. 4).

Within the didactics of translation, Mraček (2015; see also Mračková Vavroušová, 2017) emphasises that some authors go even beyond the constructivist concept of the teaching process and suggest a more precise classification of pedagogical approaches: transactional, transformational and transgressive. The transactional approach is based on

cooperative teaching (student interaction during group work). The transformational approach considers the learning subject (i.e. the student) to be the centre of the teaching process while applying the constructivist method and the social dimension of learning. This approach is associated with the term *scaffolding*, expressing the support of the teacher, who, as a facilitator, provides students with assignments and tasks that they would not be able to carry out on their own. In the next stage, we can speak of the transgressive approach, in which the rules applicable to the organization of teaching are exceeded. In this case, the teacher is not a source of information and does not interfere with the teaching process – students learn through cooperation in groups, looking for answers to questions according to their interests. The acquired knowledge is applied in the real world or practice. The model of subtitling training that we present in this paper uses mainly the first two approaches – *transactional* and *transformational*. The specific steps of this model are detailed in the next section.

4 Proposition of a model of subtitling training

In this section, we describe the individual phases of a model of subtitling training we applied in the French and German courses:

1) In the beginning, we introduced basic notions, principles and strategies of subtitling. We need to stress that the majority of students already had some previous experience in subtitling from English to Slovak. Therefore, we provided them with a list of key principles and strategies of subtitling, drawing on the work of Pošta *Titulkujeme profesionálně* (2014) and *The Code of Good Subtitling Practice* (1998) by Ivarsson and Carroll. Pošta (2014, pp. 42-46) distinguishes two main types of constraints in subtitling:

1. space constraints - each subtitle has to fit into limited space on the screen. They relate to the number of characters per line (max. 30-37 characters per line), the position of the text and the number of lines (max. 2 lines);
2. time constraints - each subtitle has to be shown for a certain optimal time. These were relevant when students worked with the software *Amara* and *Subtitle workshop*. For the Amara software, pre-recorded tutorials are available on the platform detailing specific norms of creating subtitles for the TED platform. Therefore, they are very useful even for people without any previous experience in subtitling.

2) The second step consisted of the distribution of work among students. Each short film was divided between two students which allowed for pair work. Each student translated one half of the assigned film and proofread the other half translated by his classmate. Students therefore had the chance to be in the role of a translator, but also that of an editor. In this way, final subtitles were the result of their collaborative work.

3) Thirdly, this was followed by a fruitful discussion in class. Students were invited to present and explain their translation strategies for specific translation problems. Our role was to steer the discussion as well as answer students' questions and provide them with our insights into specific translation problems, leading them to adopt final translation solutions.

4) In the fourth step, students implemented our comments before submitting the final subtitle file and were specifically asked to unify any remaining discrepancies in terminology, place names, or names of characters that we pointed out during discussions and resulted from the fact that students worked in pairs.

5) As to the last step, students handed in the final version of subtitles in the form of an srt. file. We proofread the subtitles one last time to make sure that all of the typos and

spelling mistakes were eliminated. The films were subsequently screened in class with students' subtitles in Slovak.

5 Assessing quality in subtitling

Quality can be considered a central feature of translation, whether we talk about machine translation, literary translation, specialized translation or audiovisual translation, there are various models for its measuring. In the field of subtitling, there is *The Code of Good Subtitling Practice* developed by Ivarsson and Carroll in 1998. It consists of a list of instructions related to subtitle spotting and translation; however, these instructions seem too general to be used for the assessment of specific errors in a specific film. The model we consider to be the most relevant for the assessment of the quality of subtitles is the FAR model (standing for Functional equivalence, Acceptability and Readability) developed by J. Pedersen and presented in his paper *The FAR model: assessing quality in interlingual subtitling* (2017). Pedersen (2017, p. 210) points out that recently, there has been a growing interest in the field of intralingual subtitling (subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing) and subsequently, the quality of subtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing has been discussed as well. This resulted in the development of the NER model by Romero-Fresco and Martinez in 2011. Pedersen further considers the differences between intralingual and interlingual subtitling being too important to allow for the application of the NER model to interlingual subtitling as well. This led him to propose "a tentative general model for the assessment of quality in interlingual subtitles" (ibid. p. 214).

Even though there are few shortcomings in terms of this model's scope, as acknowledged by Pedersen himself, which are little used for measuring the quality of intralingual subtitles and assessing subtitles solely as the final product (not taking into account the subtitling process as such where quality also plays an important role), nevertheless, we consider it to be the most up-to-date and accurate model for assessing the quality of interlingual subtitles and the most relevant model for our research. The classification of individual categories of errors as defined by Pedersen (2011, pp. 217-223) is provided below:

- 1) functional equivalence (the message we want to get across)
 1. semantic errors (errors resulting in shifts in meaning)
 2. stylistic errors (errors related to erroneous terms of address, wrong register (too high or too low), language not corresponding to the style of the original)
- 2) acceptability (conformity to the target language norms)
 1. grammatical errors (errors of target language grammar, generally language-specific)
 2. spelling errors (errors changing the meaning of the word, and errors making a word impossible to read)
 3. idiomaticity errors (errors disrupting natural use of language)
- 3) readability (technical norms or issues)
 1. segmentation and spotting (non-respect of the semantic or syntactic structure of the message)
 2. punctuation and graphics (a dash for each speaker in a dialogue subtitle, italics etc. and their consistency of use; also language-specific)
 3. reading speed and line length (nowadays, the long-held standard of 12 characters per second (cps) is challenged and reading speeds of 15 or even 17 cps are used in certain genres).

Errors may be further classified as being: minor (0,25 point), which are detected only by attentive viewers; standard (0,5 point), ruining the subtitle for the majority of viewers; and major (1 point), which prevent the comprehension not only of the given subtitle but also the one(s) following it. Pedersen further acknowledges that it is a "penalty point system" (Pedersen, 2017, p. 217). Even though it only assesses what is wrong in the subtitles, it has its place in the teaching process since based on this model, teachers can provide students with constructive feedback (ibid.). We believe that an in-depth analysis of the mistakes, followed by a discussion with students focusing on the root of the problem, and providing constructive feedback constitute the main pillars for helping students to learn from their mistakes and prevent them from making the same types of errors in their future translation assignments. We also believe that it needs to be stressed that we tried to adopt a more or less balanced approach, i.e. not only pointing out students' mistakes but also highlighting correct translation solutions. The aim should always be not to discourage students, but to encourage them to become better subtitlers.

In the following section, we provide representative errors from students' subtitled translations from French to Slovak (film 1: *Avant que de tout perdre*) as well as from German to Slovak (film 1: *Lothar Knessl (documentary)*) for each category of the FAR model errors. For each example, we provide a translation into English of the original (French/German) subtitle, student translation of the given subtitle into Slovak and the final/revised translation. Each example is followed by a short commentary.

5.1 Semantic errors

As already mentioned, semantic errors result from the inadequate transfer of meaning. The penalty score for semantic errors (minor, standard and major) is 0,5; 1 and 2 points respectively.

film 1: *Avant que de tout perdre* (French-Slovak)

00:15:44.640 --> 00:15:46.600

FR: *C'est quoi cette faute, Mme Besson ?*

EN: *So what happened, Mrs. Besson?*

SK: *Je tam chyba, pani Bessonová?* (student translation)

EN: *Is there a mistake, Mrs Besson?*

SK: *Čo sa stalo, pani Bessonová?* (revised translation)

EN: *What happened, Mrs Besson?*

In the example above, the semantic error occurred due to the literal translation of the word *faute* (fault) as *a mistake*. The original subtitle *C'est quoi cette faute, Mme Besson ?* (*So what happened, Mrs Besson?*) refers to the reasons for her getting fired (she actually left her job and place to escape from her abusive husband). Not only that student translation *Je tam chyba, pani Bessonová?* (*Is there a mistake, Mrs Besson?*) doesn't fit into the context, but it is also incoherent with the following subtitle, which puts the question more explicitly: *Votre licenciement. (You getting fired)*. Since this error can disrupt comprehension of a sequence of subtitles, we classified it as major (2).

film 2: *Lothar Knessl (documentary)* (German-Slovak)

00:00:15,068 --> 00:00:19,017

DE: *Tischlermeister in Südmähren bei Brünn.*

EN: *master carpenter in South Moravia near Brno.*

SK: *truhlársky tesár na Južnej Morave,*

ned'aleko Brna (student translation)
 EN: *coffin carpenter in South Moravia
 near Brno*
 SK: **stolársky majster** na južnej Morave,
ned'aleko Brna. (revised translation)
 EN: *master carpenter in South Moravia
 near Brno.*

In the above-given subtitle, the semantic error relates to the Slovak translation of the profession *Tischlermeister*. The main protagonist Lothar Knessel recalls his grandfather who was a carpenter or master carpenter (in German *der Tischlermeister*). Student translation contains a shift in meaning since in Slovak, the profession *truhlársky tesár* (*coffin carpenter*) refers to a craftsman who specializes exclusively in making coffins (hence coffin maker). This error occurs only in one subtitle and does not significantly impact its consequent reception by the viewer, we therefore classified it as a standard mistake (1).

5.2 Stylistic errors

Unlike the semantic errors, stylistic errors are less severe ones, generally causing nuisances, not problems with understanding of the given subtitle.

film 1: Avant que de tout perdre (French-Slovak)

00:13:46.560 --> 00:13:48.840

FR: *Oui ils sont à mon père, il va à la chasse.*

EN: *They are my dad's. He hunts.*

SK: *Áno, sú otcove. On chodí na lov.* (student translation)

EN: *Yes, they are my dad's. He hunts.*

SK: *Áno, sú otcove. Chodí na poľovačku.* (revised translation)

EN: *Yes, they are my dad's. He hunts.*

This example relates to the inadequate translation of the word **la chasse** (*hunting*) as *lov* rather than *poľovačka*. Even though both of these expressions can be translated into English as *hunting*, in Slovak, in this context, the correct expression is the second one since it refers to deer hunting in the forest and the term that is associated with it is *poľovačka*. Based on the nuisance that is caused by this error, we classified the error as standard (0,5).

film 2: Lothar Knessl (documentary) (German-Slovak)

00:01:50,895 --> 00:01:53,861

DE: *Sudetenland als Sprachraum, als sprachliche Einheit
 erhalten bleibt.*

EN: *Sudetenland will be preserved as a linguistic area,
 as a linguistic unity.*

SK: *zachovať Sudety ako jazykovú oblasť,
 ako jazykovú jednotku.* (student translation)

EN: *preserve Sudetenland as a linguistic area,
 as a linguistic unit.*

SK: *zachovať Sudety ako jazykovú oblasť,
 jazykovú jednotu* (revised translation)

EN: *preserve Sudetenland as a linguistic area,
 as linguistic unity.*

The example relates to the place-name *Sudety* (in German *Sudetenland*), which formed the border area of today's Czech Republic. Until 1945, it was inhabited mostly by the German population and during the Nazi occupation, it was characterized by a political (ideological) and linguistic connection with the German Empire. Literal translation *jazyková jednotka* (in German *sprachliche Einheit*) is not optimal since, in the given context, the used Slovak equivalent is *jazyková jednota* (*linguistic unity*). As in the previous example, this error was also classified as standard (0,5).

5.3 Grammatical errors

As already pointed out, errors in grammar are generally specific to the target language (in our case Slovak). As emphasized by Pedersen (2011) and Pošta (2014), subtitles fall somewhere between spoken and written language and can therefore contain some typical features of spoken language (subject deletion, incomplete sentences and so on).

film 1: Avant que de tout perdre (French-Slovak)

00:14:41.720 --> 00:14:43.520

FR: *parce qu'on va bientôt partir.*

EN: *We're leaving soon.*

sk: **Za** chvíľu odchádzame. (student translation)

EN: *We're leaving in a moment.*

SK: **O** chvíľu odchádzame. (revised translation)

EN: *We're leaving in a moment.*

The grammatical error analysed in the above example relates to the wrong use of a preposition. Students opted for the expression **za** chvíľu instead of **o** chvíľu (*in a moment*). Although the expression **za** chvíľu is frequently used and heard in spoken language and colloquial speech, it is not merely a typical spoken language feature, but also a feature of non-standard Slovak. We classified this error as standard (0,5).

film 2: Lothar Knessl (documentary) (German-Slovak)

00:00:27,847 --> 00:00:32,410

DE: *eigentlich tschechisch sprechende Menschen*

EN: *actually Czech speaking people*

SK: *vlastne českí hovoriaci ľudia* (student translation)

EN: *actually Czech speaking people*

SK: *vlastne český hovoriaci ľudia* (revised translation)

EN: *actually Czech speaking people*

The above-given student translation contains the following grammatical error – *českí hovoriaci* should be correctly written as *český hovoriaci ľudia* with 'y'. The correct distinction between the letters *i* and *y* is a typical feature of the Slovak language. Students were probably confused by the nominative of the plural (*ľudia* – *people*) when Slovak adjectives are written with an 'i' and the end (*českí ľudia* – *Czech people*). The error can also be classified as standard (0,5).

5.4 Spelling errors

Spelling errors can also be classified as minor (any spelling error), standard (changing the meaning of the word) or major (making the word impossible to read).

film 1: Avant que de tout perdre (French-Slovak)

00:21:02.680 --> 00:21:05.120

FR: *J'ai dû envoyer Clara à votre place, vous étiez prévue en caisse 21.*EN: *Clara had to replace you at register 21.*SK: *Clara vás musela **vystriedit'** na 21-ke.* (student translation)EN: *Clara had to replace you at 21.*SK: *Clara vás musela **vystriedat'** na 21-ke.* (revised translation)EN: *Clara had to replace you at 21.*

In the example above, the Slovak verb *vystriedat'* (to replace) was misspelt as *vystriedit'* (we marked this also in the English translation by changing the vowel *a* to the vowel *i* - *replce*). This error was classified as minor (0,25) since there was no change in the word's meaning. Moreover, spelling errors were rather scarce. We believe that it can be explained by the fact that students worked in pairs, translated one half of the film and proofread the other half translated by his/her classmate.

film 2: Lothar Knessl (documentary) (German-Slovak)

00:01:28,445 --> 00:01:34,147

DE: *Meine Mutter kam aus Sudetenland,
war eher deutschorientiert.*EN: *My mother came from the Sudetenland,
she was more German-oriented.*SK: *Keďže pochádzala zo Sudet,
inklinovala skôr Nemecku.* (student translation)EN: *Since she came from the Sudetenland,
she was more German-oriented.*SK: *Keďže pochádzala zo Sudet,
inklinovala skôr **k** Nemecku.* (revised translation)EN: *Since she came from the Sudetenland,
she was more German-oriented.*

In the above student translation, the preposition *k* (towards) is missing in Slovak. This error occurred most probably due to inattention and is assessed as minor (0,25) since there is neither a change in meaning nor a significant impact on the subtitle's readability.

5.5 Idiomaticity errors

In the FAR model, idiomaticity errors pertain to the natural, or rather unnatural, use of language, and not simply to the use of idiomatic expressions.

film 1: Avant que de tout perdre (French-Slovak)

00:16:47.200 --> 00:16:49.680

FR: *C'est Sophie. Elle a vu ton mari dans le magasin.*EN: *Sophie saw your husband in the store.*SK: ***Sophie volá.** Videla tvojho muža v obchode.* (student translation)EN: *It's Sophie. She saw your husband in the store.*SK: ***Volá Sophie.** Videla tvojho muža v obchode.* (revised translation)EN: *It's Sophie. She saw your husband in the store.*

The error analysed above results from the simple change of the position of the word *Sophie* and *volá* - both would be translated as *It's Sophie (on the phone)*. However, student

translation is slightly unnatural and it would be better to put the name *Sophie* at the end in order to emphasize it). This error can be classified as minor (0,25).

film 2: Lothar Knessl (documentary) (German-Slovak)

00:03:51,799 --> 00:03:54,574

DE: *aber irgendeine Konstellation hat dazu geführt.*

EN: *but some constellation has led to it.*

SK: *Ale nejaká **konštalácia***

k tomu viedla. (student translation)

EN: *But some constellation
has led to it.*

SK: *ale **viedli k tomu***

isté okolnosti. (revised translation)
but some circumstances have led to it.

The above subtitle doesn't come off as natural in Slovak which is partly due to the non-optimal literal translation from German – the lexeme *die Konstellation* was translated as *konštalácia* (*nejaká konštalácia k tomu viedla*). Besides the unnaturalness, the word *konštalácia* is also misspelt and should be written as *konštelácia*. We believe that this error could have been caused by phonetic interference from the German language. The main protagonist talks about his friend from childhood who was of Jewish descent and he gradually stopped seeing her. The subtitle *ale viedli k tomu isté okolnosti* seems much more natural.

5.6 Segmentation and spotting

This category of errors relates to incorrect segmentation of subtitles which may distract the viewer while spotting errors result from bad synchronisation with the sound and the image.

film 1: Avant que de tout perdre (French-Slovak)

00:19:11.400 --> 00:19:14.760

FR: *S'il vous plaît, réglez vos histoires
dehors, pas dans ce bureau.*

EN: *Miriam, you need to take
your problems elsewhere.*

SK: *Prosím vás, svoje veci si riešte
inde, nie v tejto kancelárii.* (student translation)

EN: *Please discuss your stuff
elsewhere, not in this office.*

SK: *Prosím,
riešte si svoje problémy inde.* (revised translation)

EN: *Please,
discuss your problems elsewhere.*

In the given example, the segmentation of the subtitle was adjusted by eliminating the redundant part of the sentence (*pas dans ce bureau – nie v tejto kancelárii – not in this office*). The subtitle was segmented based on its meaning: the first line contains only the word *Prosím* (*Please*), while the second line contains the main information *riešte si svoje problémy inde* (*discuss your problems elsewhere*). According to Pošta (2014), some authors prefer to segment the subtitle based on the easier reading of the information, while others prefer the equal length of both lines.

film 2: Lothar Knessl (documentary) (German-Slovak)

00:03:47,703 --> 00:03:50,175

DE: *weil ich erfahren habe,
sie ist jüdischer Herkunft.*EN: *because I learnt
that she was of Jewish descent.*SK: *že dôvodom, prečo sa to stalo,
bol jej židovský pôvod.* (student translation)EN: *the reason why that happened
was her Jewish descent.*SK: *že dôvodom
bol jej židovský pôvod.* (revised translation)EN: *the reason
was her Jewish descent.*

In the Slovak subtitle, the segmentation needed to be adjusted using the strategy of condensation more optimally – the words *prečo sa to stalo* (*why that happened*) are irrelevant and redundant. By eliminating it, the meaning of neither the expressive component is altered and the segmentation of the subtitle seems more fitting.

5.7 Punctuation and graphics

The category of punctuation and graphics contains errors related, for example, to the use of italics, dashes, quotation or exclamation marks (in French preceded by a blank space, in Slovak without a blank space), three dots to mark unfinished utterances, commas and so on. These can vary in different national norms.

film 1: Avant que de tout perdre (French-Slovak)

00:03:46.840 --> 00:03:48.640

FR: *Mets ta ceinture, s'il te plaît.*EN: *Put your seat belt on, please.*SK: *Pripútaj sa prosím ťa.* (student translation)EN: *Fasten your seat belt please.*SK: *Pripútaj sa, prosím ťa.* (revised translation)EN: *Fasten your seat belt, please.*

The error in the above example consists of the omission of a comma before the expression *prosím ťa* (*please*). It is only a minor error (0,25), however, it appeared in the subtitles repeatedly, either before the expression *prosím ťa* (*please*) or names of persons when addressing someone. Another common error was when students inserted a blank space before quotation/exclamation marks (hypnosis by the French subtitles), however in Slovak, these punctuation marks follow the word immediately (without a blank space).

film 2: Lothar Knessl (documentary) (German-Slovak)

00:03:32,969 --> 00:03:36,841

DE: *Sie sagte:**Warum gehst du nicht mehr zu Eva?*EN: *She said:**Why are you not seeing Eva anymore?*SK: *Spýtala sa ma:**Prečo už nechodíš za Evou?* (student translation)

EN: *She asked me:*

Why are you not seeing Eva anymore?

SK: **Spýtala sa ma,**

prečo už nechodím za Evou. (revised translation)

EN: *She asked me*

why I am not seeing Eva anymore.

In the revised subtitle, we change the direct speech to indirect (the documentary features only one protagonist, therefore, the procedure seems justified), thus avoiding the unnecessary use of colons and quotation marks when marking direct speech.

5.8 Reading speed and line length

This category of errors relates to the incorrect reading speed of the subtitle (the optimal reading speed in subtitles is defined differently by different authors) and the line length (the subtitle is too long, i.e. contains too many characters). As to the French film, we didn't identify any errors related to the line length (which we evaluate as very good), neither errors related to the incorrect reading speed (since the subtitles were already timed). However, we provide one example of this category of errors from the German film below.

film 2: Lothar Knessl (documentary) (German-Slovak)

00:05:07,020 --> 00:05:12,913

DE: *Stellungnahme betrieben,*

du sollst dich nicht an die Tschechen halten,

oder mehr an Deutschen halten.

EN: *To take a stand,*

you should not stick to the Czechs

or you should stick to the Germans more.

SK: *jasný postoj, či sa viac prikláňať*

k Nemcom alebo k Čechom. (student translation)

EN: *clear position whether to sticks more*

to Germans or Czechs.

SK: without change, however, it is necessary to adjust the time for which the subtitle is shown.

As to the strategy of condensation, the analysed subtitle was optimal, however, we have an objection to its rather long display on the screen (almost 6 seconds). This reflects negatively on the readability of the next subtitle. In this case, it would be more fitting to reduce the time in which the subtitle is shown to ensure better readability. However, we note that cases of non-optimal reading speed or non-optimal display of subtitles on the screen were rather rare in student subtitles, which we evaluate as very good.

6 Conclusion

In this paper, we proposed a model of training in the field of subtitling within the French and German translation studies programmes. The model is based on the constructivist concept, emphasizing the principle of cooperation, interaction and social dimension of learning, and simulated translation assignments. It allowed for fruitful discussions among students in a class to find the most adequate translation solutions and learn from mistakes. The most frequent errors that we identified based on the FAR model

were idiomaticity errors (relating to the unnatural use of language), but also semantic errors (that we consider to be the most serious ones). Simulated translation assignments were perceived by students very positively and we will certainly incorporate them into the teaching process also in future, perhaps in a slightly modified form, using different film genres etc. The model, therefore, seems justified in subtitling training and we believe it could also be applied to other types of translation, such as dubbing and literary translation, but also specialized translation. Moreover, students had the possibility to be involved in the whole translation process - from the assignment of the task (French / German video to create Slovak subtitles for) to submitting of the final subtitle file. Students also saw several of their competencies strengthened since they didn't only translate (or subtitle) the film, but also learned how to work in a team and reach a compromise, as well as how to proofread the Slovak text and meet the required deadline.

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