

THE EMPIRICAL STUDY OF NON-PROFESSIONAL  
SUBTITLING:  
A DESCRIPTIVE APPROACH

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## **Abstract**

This research uses a descriptive approach to analyze the production conditions and motivations of a non-professional subtitling group that operates from English into Spanish. Considerations about quality of non-professional subtitling are variable, but the proliferation of non-professional subtitles is a fact, it is present in the translation field and is a very active sub-field. The motivations of the volunteers working on one of these groups are analyzed by using Bourdieu's sociological concept of *capital* (cultural capital, symbolic capital, economic capital and social capital) and the production conditions are compared to generally agreed guidelines for professional subtitling. The data used for the study were collected by using two different methods: interviews and documents. The findings of the study show a high degree of group commitment among the volunteer translators and a convergence between their guidelines and the traditional rules of subtitling. The results of this research will be combined in future with a quality assessment developed through a corpus study and the combination of the obtained results will lead to a production experiment involving professional and non-professional subtitlers.

**Keywords:** non-professional subtitling, amateur subtitling, fansubbing, collaborative subtitling, crowdsourcing, English>Spanish subtitling

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*A mi papá,  
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## 1. Introduction

Translation practice reflects the changeable and unstable condition of the world we are living in. Technological advances and the emergence of translation technologies have altered the image we had of translation thirty years ago. Not only have these changes modified the previous modes of translation, but they have also created new fields and new needs for translation practice. Audiovisual Translation, for instance, was born alongside with technology. It was because of cinematographic developments that this translation field opened up and started to develop in the first half of the past century. Motion pictures created the different types of Audiovisual Translation, according to the visual or audiovisual possibilities they offered: first, intertitles were included in silent films, then the possibility of adding soundtracks to the films (sound films) motivated the birth of subtitling and the re-voicing techniques we use today.

The advance of audiovisual translation techniques has never stopped. On the contrary, the field has experienced “an important transformation in a relatively short period of time” (Díaz Cintas 2005: 1) in every aspect: techniques, linguistic decisions, perception of the audience and the producers, and importance and recognition of social interaction. One of the effects of this transformation has been in a non-professional branch of the field: *fansubbing*, the non-professional practice of subtitling carried out by fans. The term comes from *fan* and *subtitling*. Although fansubbing is a rather dubious practice legally, it has undergone constant development over the last three decades, perhaps making it the most active *paraprofessional* translation activity.

The importance that this activity carried out by people who engage in translation without any specialized training, known as non-professional translation, has gained in the last few years. Its progress makes us reflect on how these changes may affect the general ground on which the translation profession stands. Besides, it intrigues us about how the translation activity is shaped under these new conditions of the supply/demand relation. In view of this situation, this project has the following aims: (1) To determine if non-professional subtitles produced according to professional subtitling procedures have a similar *quality* to that of professional subtitles, and (2) To explore how it can be possible to integrate volunteer translation models to traditional translation processes. The volunteer

translation on Internet communities and technology business is known as *crowdsourcing*. By using this model, the source material is distributed among a big group of volunteer translators, the crowd, who are willing to do the translation without receiving any monetary reward.

### *1.1. A brief history of fansubbing*

In order to tackle the results and effects of fansubbing as one of the strongest manifestations of User Generated Translation, it is necessary to know how it has evolved. Traditionally, fansubs have been the subtitled versions of Japanese anime shows done by devoted fans for fans (Díaz Cintas, Muñoz 2006). This non-professional translation activity was initially understood as a result of the *fandom* movement in the United States during last three decades of the last century. Although it was not generally accepted and underwent alterations, modifications and censorship, Japanese animation was brought to the US in the late 1960s (Leonard 2005). Anime clubs appeared in the US during the mid 1970s, when their objective was basically to watch anime series on a regular basis and to share their knowledge about Japanese culture reflected in the audiovisual material that was at their disposal: “The fandom grew through screening sessions at science fiction conventions and through the efforts of Westerners who traveled to Japan” (Cubbison 2005: 48).

Fans and fan clubs started to connect themselves through networks, and by the end of the 1970s anime trading became a common activity among fans in the United States. At the same time, the term *anime* was used to mark them and to create an identity independent from that of the general science-fiction movement, where it originally started (Leonard 2005). Fan distribution networks grew in the 1980s, as fans all around the world gradually made contact with each other to trade the products they liked. Nevertheless, although fans based in the US had the possibility of acquiring video copies of the series from Japanese fans, the language still stood as a barrier between the new American users and the Japanese raw material (Cubbison 2005). The realization of this situation and its implications to the fandom community is what prompted the start of fansubbing. Groups started collaborating to produce their own translations of the material. Fans were finally able to understand what was happening on the screen. However, this activity proved to be very expensive. According to Leonard (2005: 291),

a VHS fansub copy of *Lupin III* is the earliest known fansub video: it was subtitled in 1986 and its production is considered an “anomaly” given the fact that “[i]n 1986, the technology to fansub cost over \$4000 and the time commitment to produce a fansub stretched over 100 hours.” With the reduction of the costs of technology and the popularization of anime conventions in the US during the first half of the 1990s, the popularity and distribution of fansub material grew exponentially.

The example of anime shows that licensing is a very important aspect of fansubbing and its legality. The first and most general rule of Japanese fansubbing states that fansub versions of a show will be produced only while the show is not licensed in the country where fansub is intended to be distributed (cf. Cubbison 2005, Leonard 2005, Díaz Cintas and Muñoz 2006). Once the show is licensed, the fansubbing group should stop producing the fansubs and distributing the material already produced.

Apart from the popularization of personal computers by the end of the last century, two major technological changes had a significant impact on fansubbing during the 1990s: the Internet and the DVD technology. On the one hand, the Internet offered advantages thanks to the immediacy of communication (forums, websites, e-mail, chat, etc.), the possibility to distribute material and the opportunity to access more specific software to produce subtitles. Being located at two distant places on the planet stopped being an issue for communication and interaction. On the other hand, DVD technology turned out to be a low-cost and efficient distribution method offering high storage capacity. This technological convergence changed and popularized the fansubbing activity. The technological empowerment provided fansubbers with an easy way to continue with their practice. Since 1998, most fansubs have been distributed through the Internet as encoded video files. Although the key features of fansubbing are still present in this distribution strategy, it has produced a new name, *digisubbing* (Leonard 2005). Nevertheless, regular publications, users and fansubbers do not make a distinction between the two terms and continue using *fansubbing* to refer to this practice in a broad sense.

Fansubbing continued its advance even after broadcasting enterprises started to license and broadcast software in the US. The main concerns of fansubbers of Japanese anime are related to their interests in the source culture. They consider anime as a way

to approach Japanese culture, so they are concerned with the treatment the cultural references and the way they are rendered in the target product. Anime fans have developed a close relation with the material they follow and consider themselves “guardians of the text” (Cubbison 2005: 54). They claim that professional subtitles produced by broadcasting networks follow a reductionist approach that does not allow the audience to grasp the real content of the material, and does not give them access to the source culture information the show originally offered for devoted fans. Nevertheless, commercial subtitled versions of Japanese shows are generally considered to be of a higher technical and linguistic quality than fansubs (Díaz Cintas, Muñoz 2005). Another issue relevant to fansubbing production is time. Fans are disturbed by the delays in licensing and distributing anime in the international market. Normally, the broadcasting or DVD release date for Japanese translated shows in the international market is much later than its original release on the islands. Fans who closely follow the show want to get the new episodes as soon as possible, and distribution through the Internet turns out to be a fast and simple solution for these followers.

Furthermore, due to the easy access and distribution on the Internet, fansubbing stopped being an activity restricted to Japanese shows only. Fans and followers of other audiovisual products started translating and distributing TV series and movies from all around the world. As to the technique, subtitles might be encoded into the video or they might be in a separated file that needs to be downloaded independently of the video file. In some circumstances it is evident that the rationale behind this practice is the same that once drove the beginning and advance of fansubbing in the 1980s: to contribute to an area in which the fansubbers are particularly interested and to help with its popularization in a target culture where it would otherwise remain unknown. By following this rationale, the product is more accessible to a broader audience (viewers) that belongs to different culture or linguistic groups. On the one hand, this has, for instance, helped the distribution of underground films that normally are not screened in regular theaters but in film clubs. On the other hand, however, the new modes of distribution have created a perfect environment for other types of licensed material to circulate on the Internet and among users, without significant or applicable restrictions.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Fansubbing within Translation Studies

User Generated Translation is currently present in different modes within translation practice: online volunteer translation, crowdsourcing, manga translation known as *scanlation*, amateur localization of videogames called *room-hacking*, and the previously presented non-professional subtitling, *fansubbing*. In general, fansubbing has been given little attention in the field of Translation Studies and only recently has interest in this field come to the fore.

The first studies involving fansubbing were produced in areas different from Translation Studies. This was mostly because the first interest in this subject appeared in works related to the fandom phenomena. Researchers approached fandom as a whole and needed to deal with fansubbing as part of the general movement. Some examples of this initial approach might be the article in which the Asian Cinema professor and translator Nornes (1999) refers to the practice as a manifestation of “abusive subtitling”, since it breaks the translation norms that have been generally agreed upon. In order to produce subtitles that take the spectator to the original, these subtitles opt to be source-oriented instead of suffering the “corruption” that occurs when its foreignness is reduced by making them more similar to the target culture. Subtitles, in this case non-professional subtitles, are considered to be a door to introduce the audience to the source culture, instead of a strategy of embedding the product into the target culture. Japanese Culture professor Napier (2001) discusses the main topics related to anime shows using a rather literary-critical point of view. The book mainly deals with the general situation of fandom, but it also points out the level of engagement achieved by these non-professional translator fans. Cubbison (2005), interested in Fan Studies, explains the situation within a quest framework, where fans are struggling to have some say in the market decisions and the market has not yet defined if it wants to follow the fans’ lead or, on the contrary, is trying to modify their preferences. Her study, which takes fan empowerment as basis of the fansubbing activity, analyzes the subtitling vs. dubbing discussion within the anime market. Fansubbers are motivated to translate the shows in order to obtain the “authentic version of the story”. According to her, fans are primarily against the reductionist approaches used in the translation or the

*Americanization* of the material, and they oppose the unnecessary alterations and cuts or reordering of the series. Leonard (2005), an engineer and anime fan, presents a detailed review of the progress of fansubbing and the industrialization of anime. He directly relates the popularization of anime in the United States to the fact that fans created a demand through fan clubs, fansubbing and conventions. His article mainly deals with the continuous infringement of copyright that allowed anime to become a popular genre on the US market.

Although studies on fansubbing and non-professional subtitling in general are still underrepresented within Translation Studies scholarship, at the time the above papers were published, studies on fansubbing had started appearing in Translation Studies journals and conferences. Scholars, mostly related to the field of Audiovisual Translation, started to produce papers dealing with this topic by the mid 2000s. Ferrer (2005) is one of the very first articles on non-professional subtitling which tries to introduce and state of the art of two fan translation practices related to Japanese material: fansubbing and scanlation. As to fansubbing, she points out that fans prefer a product that can easily recognize as a translation, that is to say, a product reflecting the Japanese culture embedded in the source material. The article goes into a detailed analysis of both the technical and the linguistic characteristics and problems that are commonly presented in the subtitles produced by fans: number of characters per lines, lines per subtitle, synchronization problems, translation errors, orthotypographical mistakes, location of the subtitle on screen, etc. Ferrer sees fansubbing as a risky activity that has already influenced the mainstream practice of professional subtitling. She points out that, in some circumstances, the existence of a previous fan-produced version has defined the official translation of audiovisual material. For instance, in 2002 the Spanish translators of *Chobits* were instructed to keep the name of a character in Japanese because the fans were already used to it, as it had been kept in the original language for the fansubbed version. She considers that it might be possible to see DVD editions including *extra* subtitle options that meet the needs of this *small* part of the fansub public in a near future.

In the same year, Kayahara (2005), who considers fansubbing not restricted to Japanese-produced material only, explains that there are three main reasons that prompt the desire to produce fansubs:

a desire to make minor films (that go unnoticed by the major distribution companies) more widely available to non-Japanese speakers; to have minor films noticed, and hopefully redistributed, by the major companies; and to make available a subtitled version where only a dubbed version exists. (2005: 69)

Kayahara's article is especially important because, after presenting these reasons, it goes on to explain that the ease of copying DVDs might have an important impact on the fansubbing activity, given the fact that this technological empowerment could lead to the popularization of fansubbing for audiovisual material in a more general and broader sense. Kayahara argues that thanks to DVD, it is possible that "other genres will pick up on fansubbing, thus providing a more diverse field of source material for audiovisual translation theorists to work with, and raising the visibility of subtitling as a practice" (2005: 69).

In a more production-focused approach, Díaz Cintas and Muñoz (2006) describe how human resources are organized in the fansubbing production workflow and the requirements they have to produce the subtitles. The steps within this process are also explained, from the moment when the group obtains the raw video material to the publication of the fansubbed episode. They state that "[o]ne of the most interesting facts about fansubs is that translators know that they are addressing a rather special audience made up of people very interested in the world of anime and, by extension, in Japanese culture" (2006: 46). This encourages Japanese fansubbers to transgress the rules of formal subtitling: they argue that producing a more source-oriented version would help them to get into the source culture.

Pérez-González (2006) presents the origins of the fansubbing activity and explains the process adopted by the fansubbing networks to produce the subtitled material. Furthermore, the features of the fansubbing process are analyzed in contrast to the regular rules followed in the mainstream subtitling practice applied for the commercial industry. Pérez-González criticizes the biased approach that previous

studies have brought into play when appraising fansubbing practices. He argues that potential propagation of fansubbing has been revised “exclusively by recent developments in the audiovisual translation industry, rather than the media industry as a whole” (ibid. 270). The evidence of user-producer interaction in the current situation and the new consumer initiatives indicate that “the power of media consumers is set to grow further in the future” (ibid. 274). Pérez-González points out the relevance and existence of the fan-technology relation to different fields from translation activity, and that active consumers have used technology to start changing the previous decision-making process in the whole media industry. Hence, to gain real insight into the fansubbing phenomenon it is appropriate to visit the common grounds of media and the language industries to develop more solid basis for advanced studies.

In a subsequent article, Pérez-González (2007) revisits the most specific differences between non-professional subtitling and professional subtitling, and he presents (to the best of my knowledge) one of the first empirical studies on fansubbing using a sample corpus. Pérez-González (2007) relies on a multimodal theoretical framework as the methodological strategy to study this sample corpus to evaluate the current state of fansubbing conventions. His analysis goes throughout the corpus describing how the fansubbing techniques transgress, modify or enlarge the most-accepted techniques used in mainstream subtitling. The aim of the detailed analysis is to examine how “one of the most consolidated emerging subtitling cultures is contributing to the evolution of subtitling practices” (ibid: 78). The development of the technological means that are accessible to the non-professional subtitlers makes clear that “the rationale for the use of audiovisual translation in the near future is likely to become more heterogeneous, less predictable” (2007: 77).

As was pointed out by some of the scholars mentioned above, the technological empowerment of users has proven useful in spreading the user-generated subtitling activity to other audiovisual genres different from anime. Fansubbing websites of audiovisual material different to anime have been created all around the world and have produced subtitles for both licensed and non-licensed films and TV shows. The spectrum of user-generated subtitling has broadened and so has the field of study. Empirical studies with a clear reference for quality accomplishment have been carried



out by scholars in different language pairs, including Bogucki (2009) and La Forgia, Tonin (2009).

The quality of the non-professional subtitles in Polish for the academy-awarded film *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* is discussed in Bogucki (2009). The inferior quality offered by the non-professional subtitles is stated at the beginning of the article since, according to the author, “the product under discussion does not qualify as fully-fledged subtitling” (2009: 49). This article explores the non-professional subtitling of a reknown Hollywood franchise; it studies the non-professional translation of audiovisual material that is not part of the Japanese anime. The aim of these subtitlers is basically to go against the delayed release of films in the target country/linguistic community, thus “[t]hey rarely work with classics, as the intention behind their work is to make local viewers familiar with recent film productions” (ibid.). The error analysis presents a linguistic assessment of the non-professional subtitles, which allows the errors to be connected to a likely production condition in the translation process. On the one hand, the limited access to the source material completely contradicts what is considered an appropriate source material package. Non-professional subtitlers in this case used a camcorder recording of the original cinema release as the source video material and they did not have access to the written script, so they relied on a low-quality version and their “limited knowledge of the source language” to tackle the translation task. Bogucki clearly states that non-professional subtitling is guided more by instinct than by reliance on the subtitling standards agreed within the translation scholarship:

The problem with amateur subtitling lies not so much in squeezing the gist of what the original characters say into 30 or so characters per line to enable the audience to appreciate the filmic message without too much effort; the problem, it seems, lies mostly in the quality of the source material and the competence and expertise of the translator. (2009: 50)

Problems with the technical aspects of the translation offered are also presented side by side with the linguistic aspects assessed in the excerpts. The final conclusion is that “the product of amateur subtitling tends to be marred by translational error due to

the translator's lack of linguistic competence in the SL, incomplete source texts, or both" (2009: 56).

La Forgia and Tonin (2009) present a case study that analyses how the intercultural references present in a TV series are rendered into Italian and Spanish for its correspondent subtitled and dubbed versions to be broadcasted in Spain and Italy. They also decided to analyze the translation options offered by fansubbers as a way to understand if it is possible to improve the proficiency of both professional and non-professional screen translators. The study was based on the analysis of the translation into Italian and Spanish of one episode of the series *Supernatural*, produced in the United States. After analyzing the five renderings into the two target languages (Italian dubbing, Italian subtitling, Italian fansub, Spanish dubbing/subtitling and Spanish fansub), they conclude that

[t]he fansub translations, in general, are of much lower quality than the official translations. First, this is due to the lack of linguistic and pragmatic competence we found in many cases, and second, because they tend to overlook the function of intertextual references, hence treating them as mere linguistic and not cultural "facts", which leads them to translate (not always adequately) only the linguistic form, losing the cultural component. (2009, my translation)

Regardless of the lack of attention that user-generated translation have received from translation scholars, thanks to this seminal works and to the mandatory need to research on every aspect of the current translation market, fansubbing has made its way into general translation scholarship. Munday (2008: 190) recognizes fansubs and video games as a "site for creativity". He mentions the rapid advance of fansubbing that was made possible by the "greater access to and affordability of subtitling software" (ibid.) and he also points out that non-professional subtitling is penetrating other audiovisual translation genres. Nevertheless, there are other sectors of the community that remain unaware of the advance of these translation modalities. For instance, Hillman's chapter about subtitling in *The Oxford Handbook of Translation Studies* (2011) does not include any reference to fansubbing or non-professional subtitling. On the contrary, O'Hagan refers to the alarmingly little attention that translation theory has given to user-generated translation practices and states that "Translation Studies can no longer afford to

overlook the fan translation phenomenon” (2008: 178) since the new modes of communication indicate that “the presence of fandom in general in relation to textual creation will continue to grow” (ibid.)

## 2.2. *Crowdsourcing and fansubbing as a new translation mode*

Web 2.0 brought with it the concept of consumer interaction and changed the previous order of producer-user relation that served as a base for the first generation of the WWW community. The role of passive users was left behind and users became, according to O’Hagan, “producers who freely contribute a wide range of content for public consumption as exemplified in *Wikipedia* and *YouTube*” (2009: 96). The evolution of this cybernetic interaction status brought into the picture the *free labour of love* that would later on allow the development of the social networking approach called “crowdsourcing”. This economic model is based on the idea of taking advantage of the talent of a general public willing to do volunteer work that will produce results of use to a wider audience.

This model of crowdsourcing has been adopted by different organizations to produce translations, with Facebook being the best-known and most successful case. In 2007 *Facebook* launched its translation model based on crowdsourcing. They developed a translation application called *Facebook Translations* that allowed motivated users not only to propose translation for the website into 16 major languages initially (now it is being translated into over 90 languages), but also to evaluate the quality and appropriateness of previous proposed translations by using a voting system (Losse 2008). This large-scale project proved itself not only useful but also adequate to the new status of users. *Facebook* leveraged the interest of dedicated users to attract more users in other languages and it succeeded. O’Hagan (2009) considers this as one of the first steps of user-generated translation towards legitimization, and she was more than right if we take into account that other cyber-communities have successfully adopted crowdsourcing models in order to provide their users with translations (e.g. Twitter, TED). She argues that:

At the heart of the concept of crowdsourcing is the inherent nature of the Internet as a porous rather than a closed network, leading to a whole new model of production and distribution of translation. (Forthcoming)

Under these circumstances, some of the regular discussions of the translation activity will soon need to be revisited. Concepts such as reward, visibility, quality and motivation are being pushed to extremes, since user-generated translation practitioners can be considered to be direct opposed to regularly-paid professional translators. O'Hagan states that “[c]rowdsourcing illustrates how technological consequences challenge the conventional modus operandi, disrupting a well-established practice with another often completely different approach” (ibid.). According to her, the discussion remains open given that the interest of potential clients in crowdsourcing strategies alarms the professional translators and raises concerns about the de-professionalization of translation.

### *2.3. Quality and non-professional subtitling*

Scholarly considerations on non-professional subtitling quality vary greatly. Díaz Cintas and Muñoz (2006) and Martínez (2010) explain that the quality of non-professional subtitling varies depending on the process and the groups in charge of producing them. Díaz Cintas and Muñoz (2006) state that professional subtitled versions of anime shows are considered to be of a higher technical and linguistic quality than their non-professional counterparts. Nevertheless, they add that:

it is not surprising that the quality of the translations circulating on Internet is very often below par, although on occasions some fansubs do not have anything to envy to the quality of the licensed translations, commercially distributed on DVD or broadcast on television (2006: 42).

Bogucki (2009) denounces that non-professional subtitles are of a poorer quality than professional subtitles, “especially as the product of amateur subtitling tends to be marred by translational error due to the translator’s lack of linguistic competence in the SL, incomplete source texts, or both” (2009: 56). O’Hagan (2008, 2009) extends these conceptions and states that the lack of professional translation training of non-

professional translators could be compensated for by their extensive knowledge of the source material. She sees UGT as one of the paths translation will follow in the future since the *genre-specialty* developed by non-professional translators provides them with a “greater awareness of style and textual genre conventions, indicating a certain progression to a professional level” (2008: 176). O’Hagan conducted an experiment to compare the anime translation of a fansubber and a professional translator. Findings show that the translation level obtained by the fansub version might be even acceptable to commercial publishing companies.

Gambier (2009: 21) states that “the fansubs are closer to the original, wordier, more word for word, making the reading time shorter”, indicating that fansubbers do not take into consideration the viewer’s cognitive effort and he wonders if the future of translation will be in hands of amateurs transferring words using freeware tools. Besides, he considers that non-professional translation using freeware seems to have a word-based translation approach, which restrictively focuses on the linguistic level of the translation activity. O’Hagan (2009) goes further and states that it is necessary to study UGT within the theoretical framework of Translation Studies. Moreover, she proposes to test how UGT in the form of crowdsourcing can be useful for professional translation. *Facebook’s* translation experience and the *Twitter Translation Center* initiative are important evidence of the usefulness of UGT. In general, non-professional translation is becoming more and more visible within Translation Studies. For example, in May 2012, the *First International Conference on Non-Professional Interpreting and Translation* will be held in Italy; this clearly shows that non-professional translation is gaining importance in the academic environment.

Establishing the object of study for a research project on user-generated translation is a complex task. Basically, the first question that needs to be taken into account is what really motivates users to change their passive and receptive role for a more active role, by becoming volunteer translators. According to Cubbison (2005), the fansubbing reaction was firstly motivated by the reductionist approach and the censorship that was flooding the anime series transmitted in the US. Another important factor is time. The delays between the release of the new episodes and their translation and distribution in the international market have been another key point in the

advancement of fansubbing (O'Hagan 2008). This reason is also valid, for example, for the case mentioned by Bogucki (2009), in which the non-professional subtitling of *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* in Polish was made available online for fans “about six weeks before the film was actually shown in cinemas in Poland, and approximately at the same time as it was released in the USA” (2009: 51).

The fast expansion of non-professional subtitling has radically changed the initial motivations of the non-professional consumer community. O'Hagan mentions a general condition for the devotedness of fans to produce subtitles without any monetary reward: “participants in these forms of translation community largely rely on self-motivation and their collaborative spirit which are allegedly facilitated by technological platforms” (2007: 158), and Díaz Cintas reminds us that, when talking about user-generated subtitling, “we are dealing with an active rather than passive viewer” (2005: 15).

#### *2.4. Types non-professional subtitling*

We can now consider that there exist two main types of user-generated subtitling based on the type of material that is translated: anime non-professional subtitling and general non-professional subtitling. The differences between these two types of non-professional subtitling modes are important here because, although they are based on the same principle: making available something that is currently missing in the target culture, the strategies and motivations are, in a manner, opposite.

On the one hand, the first group is formed by traditional fansubbers. This type of fans is guided by a source-oriented approach. Since translators know that “they are addressing a rather special audience made up of people very interested in the world of anime and, by extension, in Japanese culture” (Díaz Cintas and Muñoz 2006: 46), they are more interested in keeping the cultural references and content as explicit and evident as possible (Ferrar 2005). The audience for anime is interested in grasping the Japanese culture through this form of audiovisual produce, then “the priority is to include as much information as possible in the subtitle” (Díaz Cintas 2005: 5). This genre-defined public is conscious of the value of anime series as a gateway to establish a connection with Japanese culture and is highly interested in maintaining the bridging capability of this material as stable as possible in the target version (Cubbison 2005).

On the other hand, the aim of general non-professional subtitlers is to avoid time delays. The groups of general non-professional subtitlers produce subtitles for many series and movies pertaining to different audiovisual genres. Their motivations, as non-professional subtitling groups, are not regularly attached to any specific product but to audiovisual productions in a wider sense (Bogucki 2009, La Forgia and Tonin 2009). These are the social reasons to become an active part of a distribution community. The reason motivating personal individuals to participate in these types of groups have not been explored enough in order to offer satisfactory reasons for their behavior and their commitment to the community.

### *2.5. The Sociology of Translation*

Translation Studies *has* been highly influenced by sociology *over* the past decade and has established a clear focus on translators as agents and actors. The call for a sociological turn within the descriptive paradigm has prompted the appearance of researchers and articles applying contemporary sociological approaches (such as Pierre Bourdieu's and Bruno Latour's theories) to the context of intercultural communication and translation (cf. Pym, Shlesinger and Jettmarová 2006, Wolf and Fukari 2007). Although minor claims to apply a sociological approach to Translation Studies were made before, it was not until the end of the 1990s that translation scholars started the solid basis for what is now called the sociology of translation. Gouanvic (1997, 1998) makes use of Bourdieu's sociology for his socio-historical study of the influence of the translators as agents in the implantation of American science fiction literature in France and the consolidation of this literary genre. Simeoni (1998) applies the concept *habitus* proposed by Bourdieu to the framework of Translation Studies (more specifically, to systemic approaches) in order to change the focus of theory towards the translator. Wolf has identified aspects of Bourdieu's work and has applied them to different types of studies. Wolf (2002a) analyzes the "mediation space" in the translation into German of Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone to identify how the capitals invested in the field create power relations that are not directly related to the translation process. Wolf (2002b) studies agents involved in the selection of texts to be translated within the Late Habsburg Monarchy ideological context. And Wolf (2006)

employs the theory of symbolic forms by Bourdieu to analyze the female social agents involved in the social contexts of German-speaking countries.

Bourdieu's theory relies on a structure and complex conceptual network to understand and describe the functioning of the social world. A combination of the concepts of habitus, capital, field and *illusio* accounts for the mechanism of the social space. For the present study, we will retain the concept of capital only in order to use it as the theoretical tool to analyze the motivations of the non-professional translators.

## 2.6. Bourdieu's concept of capital

Bourdieu'sian capitals are opposed to a narrow and restricted economic theory based solely on *economic capital* and bring into play other forms of capital that are present in the functioning of the social world. The basic definition of capital offered by Bourdieu is that capitals are:

[a]ccumulated labor (in its materialized form or its 'incorporated,' embodied form) which, when appropriated on a private, i.e., exclusive, basis by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labor. (1997: 46)

Bourdieu recognizes different types of capitals that correspond to the different fields where the functions are applied. Thus, he defines capitals in several forms: *economic capital*, *cultural capital*, *social capital*, and *symbolic capital*.

Economic capital is plainly understood as monetary resources at the disposal of the individual or the group. Cultural capital is related to economic capital in the sense that it requires time and material means in order to be acquired. The process of obtaining cultural capital entails an exposure and a process within a specific field. Cultural capital may be present in three different forms:

[i]n the *embodied* state, i.e., in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; in the *objectified* state, in the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc.) which are the trace or realization of theories or critics of these theories, problematic, etc.; and in the *institutionalized*



*state*, a form of objectification which must be set apart because [...] it confers entirely original properties on the cultural capital, which it is presumed to guarantee. (1997: 47, author's emphases)

Social capital is the connections and interpersonal networks of the agent within a specific field: family, friends, colleagues, etc. Bourdieu defines social capital as:

[t]he aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition—or in other words, to membership in a group—which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital. (1997: 51)

Finally, symbolic capital refers to the prestige, recognition or status perceived by the agent due to the perceptions by the others of the other modes of capitalization. This type of capital results from the recognition by third parties of the value and legitimacy of the holder of a cultural, social, or any other type of capital. Bourdieu defines it as:

capital—in whatever form—insofar as it is represented, i.e., apprehended symbolically, in a relationship of knowledge or, more precisely, of misrecognition and recognition, presupposes the intervention of the habitus, as a socially constituted cognitive capacity. (1997: 56).

### **3. Methodology**

At this point of this dissertation, it is necessary to define and limit the coverage of the pilot study presented in this work. The general purpose of this research project is to be developed in order to be submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the master and doctorate degrees in Translation and in Intercultural Studies. For this reason, the pilot study should be taken as part of a major study that will be carried out afterwards in form of a doctorate thesis. The present study explores only the sociological part of a wider picture that will be described broadly in this section.

### *3.1. Research Questions*

The present study is aimed at answering this general question: Is fansubbing quality lower than official subtitling quality? In addition, the study will try to use the results to see if professional subtitling can benefit in any way from non-professional subtitling by answering the question: Is it possible to create a subtitling product involving professional and non-professional strategies that will produce good quality products?

### *3.2. Hypotheses*

After analyzing both the concept of quality in subtitling and the situation of professional and non-professional translators, we can propose the following working hypothesis: when the production process follows a similar set of production quality conditions, then *non-professional subtitles* will be of a quality similar to that of professional subtitles.

Testing this hypothesis will then require defining *quality* and evaluating the quality of translations by professional and non-professional subtitlers of the same audiovisual material. Initially, quality can be understood as the convergence of good production conditions that generate a final product that meets the target viewer's needs. Additionally, time is an especially important factor for non-professional subtitling. Unlike professional subtitling, the main characteristic of non-professional subtitling is that the translated version of a series episodes, for example, is posted on-line just a couple of hours after it is broadcast (Ferri: 2009). So the amount of time invested in the translation is in fact an element that needs to be considered at the time of evaluating the quality of the product.

Testing this hypothesis will require deep comprehension of both, the professional and the non-professional subtitling processes and products. Quality standards will need to be established in order to use them as an assessment tool that will make possible to carry out a comparative analysis of these two different types of translation activities.

### *3.3. Delimitation of the study*

There are three main aspects of non-professional subtitling that need to be considered within this project: 1) quality issues as explained by Ferrar 2005, O'Hagan

2009, and Bogucki 2009; 2) the individual motivations of the non-professional translators to produce the non-professional subtitles and 3) the situation of non-professional translation as a new form of translation that could become a crowdsourcing strategy implemented to complement professional subtitling (Díaz Cintas 2009; Gambier 2009; Martínez 2010). To answer this question will require a complete analysis of the non-professional subtitling process and the factors involved, whether they are individual, social or technological factors. Research consists in creating knowledge through the detailed observation and analysis of a specific phenomenon present in nature. In order to analyze this situation from a general perspective but with a focus on every aspect, we decided to take as a starting point and guiding map the organization of *functional quality* proposed by Chesterman (2004). According to Chesterman, translation quality can be defined in terms of the production conditions and the reception conditions. The control over the production process guarantees the control over the product quality. This, for instance, is the base for the creation of standards because adequate production conditions are supposed to produce a high-quality product. Then, functional quality would consider the relation that the translator has with both sides, the production conditions and the reception conditions. These relations would be the tool to assess the functional quality of the resulting translation. Nevertheless, traditional studies trying to assess quality of translation have been more focused on the side of the production conditions and the linguistic quality of the product. In general terms, this approach leaves aside the fact that production conditions constrain the translator's decision-making process since the two sides of the translation process are not adequately linked.

Applying this definition of quality to non-professional subtitling practice, we would have a picture where the production process of Japanese anime has been described by different scholars (Díaz Cintas and Muñoz 2006, Pérez-González 2006, Martínez 2010), the quality of the product has been assessed —although from a mainly linguistic approach (O'Hagan 2008, Bogucki 2009, La Forgia, Tonin 2009), but where the public and the reception in general have been left aside —one specific exception has been Caffrey's study (2009) on how the pop-up gloss in Japanese non-professional subtitling affects the viewer perception by measuring the positive effects and the cognitive efforts of the subjects under study. If we decide to take Chesterman's proposal

and consider quality relations as being highly important for the quality of the product, then we would need to propose a research method that will allow us to consider both the quality of production conditions and the quality of product reception as a tool to measure the quality of the final product.

One initial and basic step towards the clarification of the functional quality schema in this study is the understanding of the actors involved in the whole process. When defining the actors within the non-professional subtitling process, it is necessary to be clear about a distinction between active users and passive users. Given the fact that non-professional subtitlers are firstly and mainly part of the audience, as they are also users of the material they produce, they will be considered the producers of the non-professional subtitles and the term *public* will refer to the passive users who will be sitting on the role of the traditional consumer.

#### *3.4. Methods*

The basic methodology for this project comprises three different approaches: 1) a description that will allow us to understand the people involved in the making of the subtitles and their reasons for doing so; 2) a textual analysis approach that will be used to analyze a parallel corpus containing the transcriptions of the source material and their professional and non-professional translations; and 3) an experimental approach that will allow the tests of the results obtained in the previous approaches. The methods used to develop these approaches to test the hypothesis are qualitative.

The project is conceived as a whole and, in order to be aware of all the aspects included according to the functional quality conditions, three different stages are designed to cover the complete study. These stages are not necessarily progressive but are interlinked and the results of all of them will be combined to test the hypothesis under study.

*Descriptive study:* The first stage of the present study is the analysis of the strategies, conditions and motivations of a forum of non-professional subtitling. The general idea of this phase of the study is to understand how the general mechanism of producing non-professional subtitling works and what motivates people do to this work without any monetary reward.

*Corpus study:* A parallel corpus will be created to evaluate the quality of professional and non-professional subtitles. The analysis of the corpus will involve two main tasks: 1) defining the concept of quality for the project and 2) creating or adopting a categorization for the subtitling issues that will be taken into account. These categories will be established based on previous studies that have presented the typical problems and solutions in the field of subtitling (Díaz Cintas 2003; Ramière 2007; Panek 2009).

*Reception experiment:* The idea of the reception experiment is to assess the audience awareness of the differences between professional and non-professional translation. This test will include 10 subjects, five of them with basic or zero knowledge of the source language and five of them with advanced knowledge of the source language. Scenes with professional and non-professional subtitles will be presented to all of them, and they will be asked to fill in a questionnaire where they will evaluate the quality of the subtitles, expressing what aspects they rely on to assess quality.

*Production experiment:* Finally, to evaluate the quality in the production process, we will conduct a production experiment. A subtitling team will be formed by two non-professional subtitlers and one professional subtitler. This group will carry out the translation of a TV series episode. The non professional subtitlers will produce the raw translation, and the PS will do the post-editing process of this material. The effectiveness of the process will be assessed in terms of the time invested and the quality of the final product.

Due to the limitation in time and to the fact that this study is the first part of whole project, in this minor dissertation we will be focused on the first stage of the project: the descriptive study. In the present minor dissertation we will use a case study approach to assess the situation of a specific fansubbing group in order to offer an in-depth description of their motivations to produce non-professional subtitles, and a description of the translation workflow they have established and followed.

#### *3.4.1. Data collection methods*

In the light of the descriptive aim of this stage, we have decided to take advantage of two different data collection approaches to access the data we need to answer our research question and test our hypothesis. The forms of data that we have available are

then more suitable to be collected using interview and document approaches (Creswell, 1998).

The *interviews* “involve unstructured and generally open-ended question that are few in number and intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants” (Creswell 2003: 188). The use of interviews as a data-collection strategy allows researchers to have access to a considerable amount of information about the specific topics in which they are interested, being able to obtain the type of information they are looking for. For the interviews, we defined specific areas that served as general categories to classify the topics under study and the questions that were necessary to provide us with responses containing satisfactory material to produce valid results. The defined categories are:

Profile of the interviewee: age, occupation and location;

type of relation to the group and functions;

length of time of participation in the group;

understanding of the general mechanism of the group;

motivation for the active participation; and

technology tools mastered.

*Documents*, the second data collection method used, are much useful for the type of case study we decided to analyze. Creswell 2003: 187) states that the main advantages of this method are the possibility to access the participants’ direct language, the convenience of being able to refer to the material at any time and the fact that this type of documents consist already of an archive created by the same participants.

Online fansubbing communities normally take the form of an online open forum. The fact that these are online open communities becomes an advantage for the data collection phase of the project since it is possible to access a lot of material that has been stored on the website and it is available to the public. The entries and posts on the forums are normally categorized and dated, and are assigned to the person who posted them. Further, they are organized as discussions under specific topics; hence this type of

raw material offers the researcher a considerable number of possibilities to process it. The key aspect here is to understand how the material is organized. Understanding the organization of such a repository allows the study to save valuable time that is invested in the processing phase instead of the regular time investment that is required by other data sources such as interviews or questionnaires.

#### *3.4.2. Participants*

The first aspect that needs to be clarified in this section is that for the purpose of this pilot study we decided to take as object of study the non-professional subtitling production of genres different to anime. We consider it important to work with other genres for the following three reasons: (1) although every audiovisual piece is aimed at a specific audience, anime have a far more restricted and specific target audience than comedy or drama series or films produced in the United States; this is confirmed by the significant activity of the fandom community; (2) As we have previously stated, up to now most of the research that has been carried out in Translation Studies on non-professional subtitling deals with the specific subtitling of Japanese anime translation—with Bogucki (2009) and La Forgia and Tonin (2009) counting as significant exceptions—, leaving the translation of other genres underrepresented in an already neglected field; and (3) the Internet is challenging television as the main audiovisual entertainment provider. The convenience offered by streaming, such as the possibility of choosing when to watch something, in what language and in what order, means that the Internet is gaining more and more users. We would not say that Internet is taking over television yet; but that they are undergoing a synergistic process that will probably result in a new way of conceiving audiovisual entertainment. It is important to take this into account because we are slowly watching how this is happening. For instance, last March, Media Rights Capital and Netflix, both companies based on the United States, announced the production of a new series that will be distributed via Internet only, under the Internet subscription service, a market which Netflix leads in the United States and Canada. Supposedly, Netflix will invest \$100 million dollars in this series. It is important to consider this amount because it would be the first time that an internet subscription portal makes an arrangement of this magnitude for original content acquisition release.

The second aspect worth explaining is the language restriction we set for the selection process. All the material and analysis that will be developed and presented in this general study will correspond to the English>Spanish language pair. On the one hand, English, being the most popular Internet language at this moment in the world as shown by the Internet World Stats, which ranks it in the first place of the languages used in the web for the year 2010, is probably also the language used for the majority of the audiovisual material produced in the world. Hollywood remains the biggest film producing industry and the series produced in the United States are exported to most of the countries in the world. On the other hand, Spanish was chosen as target language firstly because it is the native language of the developer of this study, and secondly, in order to narrow down the object of study. We considered that the Spanish-speaking community around the world reaches a significant amount of countries and speakers that makes the object of study adequate and interesting enough for the aims we have set.

The third aspect we considered paramount for the selection of the fansubbing group that was going to be studied was continuity. Interested as we are in the definition and refinement of the translation process they have created and adopted, we needed to study a group that has been online for five years or more. This would have given us the certitude that they would have undergone progress in the translation activity and its peculiarities. Since non-professional subtitling is an activity without any monetary reward, it is normal that people are constantly entering and leaving non-professional translation groups. Nevertheless, in this aspect we are more interested in the continuity of the group as a whole than in the continuity of individuals related to the group. We were looking for an active group that normally experiences the acceptance and resignation of members as part of their voluntary condition.

After setting the requirements needed by the group that was going to be part of the study and also taking into account the limitations in time, we decided to use a non-probability convenience sample to develop the research. Convenience sampling is based on the selection of cases that are easily available to the researcher. As explained by Creswell, although using random sampling ensures the representation validity of the population, there are cases when “only a *convenience* [our emphasis] sample is possible because the investigator must use naturally formed groups (2003: 164). In our case, the



object of study was specifically a *naturally formed* group meeting the specific requirements detailed above. Hence, this was the most appropriate way to carry out the sampling process. The posterior selection of the specific participants that were interviewed followed a model of voluntary participation. Members of the non-professional subtitling group were asked to be interviewed in order to develop the present study. The selection of these subjects will be explained in detail in the following section since a first contact with the group under study was needed in order to contact and select the forum members that were interviewed. The following section will focus on the results of the document research and the interviews.

In sum, the requirements for the selection of the non-professional translation group that was used for the study can be summarized as follows:

Genre: non-anime audiovisual productions

Language pair: English>Spanish

Time operating on-line: +/- 5 years

#### **4. The Pilot Study: Describing a Non-Professional Translation Group**

Based on the requirements described in the section above and on the available non-professional subtitling groups, an Internet research was performed in order to select the participant group that was going to take part on the present study. The fan movement has received an enormous impulse from Web 2.0. The empowerment of users and their transformation into active users has caused the blossoming of the non-professional subtitling movement. On the one hand, there are international communities, with administration based in the United States, which offer subtitles in English but also translation into many other languages. Some of these websites are [www.addic7ed.com](http://www.addic7ed.com), [www.tvsubtitles.net](http://www.tvsubtitles.net), [www.subscene.tv](http://www.subscene.tv), [www.opensubtitles.org](http://www.opensubtitles.org) and [www.podnapisi.net](http://www.podnapisi.net). But on the other hand, some websites are established according to language, country or both. For instance, in Brazil we found [www.legendas.tv](http://www.legendas.tv); in France this activity is carried out by [www.top-serie.org](http://www.top-serie.org); in Italy we have [www.subfactory.it](http://www.subfactory.it); [www.grupahatak.pl](http://www.grupahatak.pl) and [www.napisy24.pl](http://www.napisy24.pl) operate in Poland and [www.subtitry.ru](http://www.subtitry.ru) is a

Russian non-professional subtitling website. In Spanish, the picture is considerably more crowded since there are many non-professional subtitling websites or subtitle-distributers available. This is maybe caused by the amount of Spanish speaking countries and speakers and there are linguistic differences between one region to another. Some of the non-professional subtitle websites in Spanish are [www.solosubtitulos.com](http://www.solosubtitulos.com), [www.buscarsubtitulos.com](http://www.buscarsubtitulos.com), [www.aRGENTeaM.net](http://www.aRGENTeaM.net), [www.subtitulos.es](http://www.subtitulos.es), [www.subdivx.com](http://www.subdivx.com), and [www.subtitulosenespanol.com](http://www.subtitulosenespanol.com).

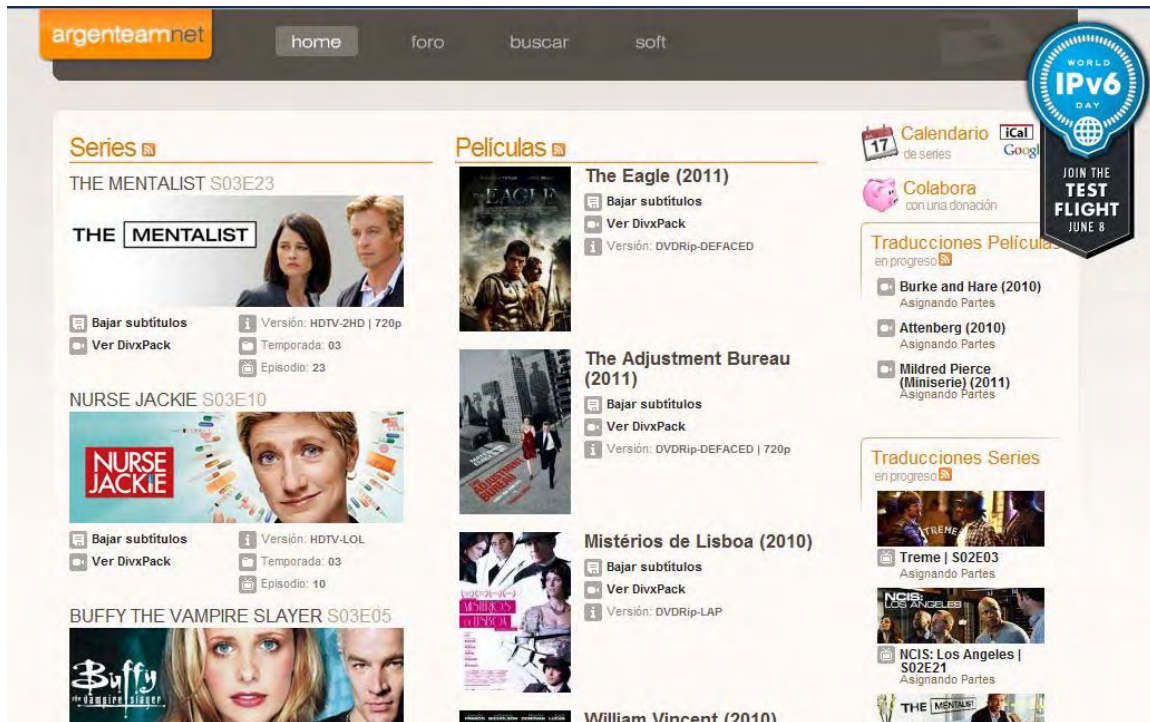
The group selected to perform this study was aRGENTeaM ([www.aRGENTeaM.net](http://www.aRGENTeaM.net)). The forum aRGENTeaM was launched on March 2003 in Argentina and is now celebrating nine years of being online and active. In May 6, 2011, they announced they had reached a total amount of 29,000 internally-produced subtitle files and as of June 8, 2011, a total amount of 481,899 users were registered with the forum.

#### *4.1 Document data*

The first document available to this descriptive study is the home page of the aRGENTeaM forum (see Figure 1). An initial inspection of the website shows that it has a sober and organized design. The screen is divided into three different spaces with different purposes. At the top there is a navigation menu with four different options that enable the navigation throughout the website. The space above the menu is divided into three columns.

The two columns on the left occupy about four fifths of the total space available and are filled with the announcements of new subtitles available, while the rest is for the third column. The announcements for the new series episode subtitles are placed on the column on the left and the ones for the new film subtitles are on the central column. Every entry is composed by an image of the series or film, the name, the release year of the films or the season and episode data for the series and links to download the subtitle file or to go to the DivxPack (which is described in Appendix 9.2). The column on the right hosts a link to calendar announcing the date of series episodes release in the United States and a link to a funding interface where users can donate for the maintenance of the website. Below those links, there are two boxes posting the

translation in progress of films and series and the status of every translation. There are two advertising boxes on the home page, one below the column on the right and one below the new series episodes on the left.



**Figure 1:** aRGENTeAM home page

#### 4.1.1. Organization of the forum

The main section of the website is under the tab *Forum*. The *Forum* is divided into nine different sections, each one of them containing different subsections. Each section refers to an audiovisual format (such as films, documentaries, series, etc.), general forums or guideline forums.

This page allows access to the forum member list. As was previously mentioned, as of June 8, 2011 there were 481,899 users registered on the forum and 180 of them were staff members. This section additionally allows us to find information about the staff members, the people who are not only users but that also intervene somehow during the production of the subtitles. There are five different roles interacting in the staff of this group: the administrator, the translator, the revisers, the moderators and the collaborators. As of that same date, the composition of the staff was as follows: 2

administrators, 53 forum moderators, 17 collaborators, 40 revisers and 119 registered translators.

The main sections into which the forum is divided and organized are:

*aRGENTeaM reglas y novedades* [aRGENTeaM rules and news]: The general topics, rules and announcements are post to this sections. The general forum is on this section and there is also a public forum for the translation department.

*aRGENTeaM películas* [aRGENTeaM films]: In this section the group posts the finished subtitles for films and also the films that are being subtitled at the time in order to attract translators interested in participating on the subtitling. There is also a forum for comments and discussions about the films.

*aRGENTeaM HD*: The subtitles for the audiovisual materials distributed in high-definition format (such as blue-ray) are included on this section. There are also general discussions about high definition characteristics, players and frequent problems.

*aRGENTeaM TV series*: As in the aRGENTeaM film section, this section hosts the subtitles for the TV series. It includes a thread with the subtitles produced, another one with the subtitles in progress, another with the series packs (where the subtitles are organized by series, seasons and years and where they also present links to download the series through a P2P file sharing network) and there is also a thread for discussion and comments on the series.

*aRGENTeaM documentales y cortos* [aRGENTeaM documentaries and short films]: In this section the groups posts the documentaries and short films subtitles that are available for download and also the ones that are being translated. There are also threads with *packs*, as well as in the films and the series sections, where links to download the audiovisual piece through a P2P network are posted.

*aRGENTeaM DVD±R*: This section is primarily dedicated to posting links to DVD ripped material; that is to say, the result of extracting audio, video and other types of data from an DVD into a hard disk in order to be able to upload it and transfer it via Internet. Nevertheless, the discussion topics also include abundant tutorials and discussions about DVD formats and how to create, edit and modify DVDs.

*aRGENTeaM Misceláneas* [aRGENTeaM miscellaneous]: This section broadens the space for social interaction to a level further of that of the audiovisual-related filiations. Although there are threads aimed at help other people with audio and video formats and transfer protocols and at maintaining discussions about freeware, there are also space for general discussions, games and exchange of music and knowledge, aimed at establishing friend relationships.

*El pochoclero*: This is a private section available only to the people with membership on the staff. It is divided into two threads: one hosting general discussions (like one of the threads in the previous section) with the specific objective of social interchange among the users. It includes an invitation to share personal accounts in order to be able to contact with others in the community by using other networks. Maybe the most active part of this subsection is the birthday wishes. There is a birthday calendar for the staff. The second thread is the forum garbage bin. All the posts that are no longer useful in the forum thread where they were originally posted are moved to this thread.

*Translation team*: As the previous section, this is also a private section and requires the user to be part of the staff in order to access it. We were allowed to access it thanks to the permission of the forum administrator. This section includes threads about the translation discussion and rules to participate in the forum. The publication and distribution of what they call *private* subtitles (subtitles translated entirely by the staff) is also done on this section.

The participation in each section as well as the weight of the section in relation to the total number of posts in the forum is presented in Table 1:

**Table 1.** Number of posts on the forum sections

Forum section	Subsections	Posts	Percentage
aRGENTeaM reglas y novedades	3	2747	0,1%
aRGENTeaM películas	7	611537	25,2%
aRGENTeaM HD	2	13253	0,5%
aRGENTeaM TV series	5	269094	11,1%

aRGENTeaM documentales y cortos	5	24877	1,0%
aRGENTeaM DVD±R	3	52395	2,2%
aRGENTeaM Misceláneas	5	815535	33,6%
El pochoclero	2	603187	24,8%
Translation team	6	35657	1,5%

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(See Appendix 9.3 for the complete index of the forum sections and subsections).

#### 4.1.2. Financial resources

Through some of the discussions in the threads it is possible to obtain information about the strategy the group uses to obtain monetary resources in order to keep the website online. On the home page, there are two advertisement spots that provide the website with economic resources. Further, as can be inferred from the link to the donation interface, the website also receives donations and funding by voluntary users.

On June 6, 2007, a user posted a question asking if there is an owner of aRGENTeaM and who pays for the hosting services to the general forum. One of the administrators of the website replied as follows:

Nadie es el dueño de aRGENTeaM. El sitio se mantiene gracias al aporte de algunos miembros que donan anonimamente la conexión. El hardware también fueron donaciones. Los subtítulos (lo más jodido de hacer) los hacen muchos usuarios desinteresadamente. La moderación la hacen muchas personas que le dedican mucho tiempo. El soporte del sitio, diseño y los desarrollos lo hacen los colaboradores en sus ratos libres (<http://foro.argenteam.net/viewtopic.php?f=63&t=98837>, Posted on June 7, 2007).

Furthermore, on May 4, 2011, a general e-mail was sent to the staff members and posted to the general discussion thread in order to ask the members of the staff for a financial donation on the grounds that (1) the forum had a debt balance of ARG \$2,400 (USD \$587 approx.); (2) the server needed to be changed; and (3) the advertising was not paying on time and had already several months of delay. A search in the garbage bin thread allowed us to see that similar messages were posted on December 3, 2008; May 1, 2009 and March 3, 2010.

#### 4.1.3. Scripts

The production of material within the group is not restricted to translation. As part of the translation activity carried out by aRGENTeaM, they have developed software and patches to previously existing software in order to make easier the task for the non-professional subtitlers that interact in the group.

On the one hand, under the menu tab *software* there is a list of utilities that help with the search and localization of the videos and the subtitles. Some of these programs and utilities are the aRGENTeaM file feeder, the aRGENTeaM TV Series Torrent RSS and the Firefox search plug-ins.

On the other hand, in a thread on the general topic of the Translation team subsection (See appendix 4), the group posted the modifications that they have produced to the script of Subtitle Workshop and they explain in detail how to set up the software properties in order to have the software in line with the guidelines established in the group agreements.

#### 4.1.4. Translation and revising guidelines

The third version of this document was posted to the forum on March 6, 2011. It specifies that it is designed to define criteria and characteristics for the tasks of the translator and the reviser. The first general rule it defines is the use of *neutral Spanish*. The presence of Spanish in different countries and the dialectal varieties produce the co-existence of local expressions, the guideline points out that the language used in the subtitles should be *neutral Spanish*, so local expressions need to be avoided.

The guidelines explain the use of punctuation marks and typographical aspects. The preferences about line breaks and characters per line are also detailed in this guide. In some cases, the explanations and decisions presented are backed up with references to scholarly publications pertaining to the area of audiovisual translation, such as Karamitroglou's (1998) proposed standards for professional subtitling, Díaz Cintas's (2003) general book on the theory and practice of subtitling and Pereira and Lorenzo's (2005) revision of the standards for teletext for the deaf and hard-of-hearing audience in Spain. Instructions (based on academic publications) about the time on screen for the subtitles and the reading speed of the audience are included. Finally, indications about

the naming conventions and the rule to include the name of the group in the credits are presented.

#### *4.1.5. Integration into the group*

The definition of the group presented in the *¿Qué es aRGENTeam?* (see Appendix 9.1.) specifies that the group is a virtual community brought together for a common interest in series, films and audiovisual material with practice and learning aims. The group remains open to everyone who is willing to participate. The only requirement to access the group website and the information available is to register for free, using a nickname; there are no other requirements or conditions to be fulfilled by new users.

The group has established a staff. This staff is made up of volunteer collaborators who dedicate time to produce the subtitles as a hobby. To become a member of this staff it is necessary to be active on the forums through good practices and to agree with the interest of the users and the needs of the community. The assignation of membership is seen as a reward for a good and constant trajectory in the forum. In February 14, 2009, one of the administrators announced the creation of a new post, *traductores junior* (junior translators) in order to give a possibility to participate in private projects and to take part in the decision making processes to the registered users who perform well and are constantly collaborating as translators:

Hemos decidido ingresar a aquellos traductores que lo merecen, premiarlos por su constancia con el foro y porque trabajan muy bien, para que puedan participar de los proyectos internos y opinar sobre la toma de decisiones. Una vez que estén listos pasarán a formar parte del staff fijo del team.<sup>1</sup>

The status of *junior translator* is seen as a transition state. If junior translators are able to achieve what is expected from them, then they are upgraded to the level of regular staff members.

## *4.2 Interview data*

### *4.2.1. Participants*

As was explained in section 3.4.2., the selection of the participants in the interview data was carried out on a volunteer basis. The contact with the group was established



through one the group administrators. Five interviews were carried out. The main principle for selecting the interviewees was to have access to a least one person in each of the roles in the forum workflow: administrator, translator, reviser, collaborator and moderator. The basic profile of the participants in the interview is described in Table 2 below.

The next sections will introduce the results found during the interviews with these five participants. Their responses will be organized according to the specific topics that were previously selected in order to grasp and understand the non-professional translator schema and the work strategies defined and adopted by aRGENTeaM as a non-professional subtitling group. The responses are grouped under the following labels:

Organization

Membership of the group

Process and responsibilities

Training

Visibility

Time invested

Motivations

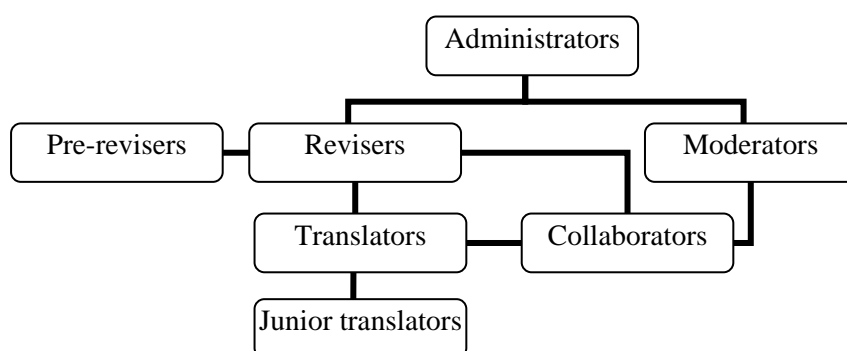
**Table 3.** Participant profiles

	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Profession</b>	<b>Role(s)</b>	<b>Integration</b>
Participant 1	M	24	Translation student	Reviser Moderator Translator	Registration in 2003. A long pause and re-integration in 2009.
Participant 2	F	35	Geologist	Reviser Moderator Translator	2007
Participant 3	M	56	Programmer analyst/chemist	Collaborator	2008
Participant 4	M	41	Graduate student/Psychologist	Administrator Translator Reviser	2004

Interviews were conducted in two periods of time and using two different strategies. The first one was a face to face interview on March 31, 2011 in Barcelona and the other four interviews were conducted between April 30 and May 2, 2011. Due to geographical reasons, the second set of interviews was carried out online.

#### 4.2.2. Workflow

There are two general workflows within the group: the translation team workflow and the forum maintenance workflow. These two workflows configure the production chain that sustains the presence of the forum on the web. The roles presented in 5.1.1. are assigned to one of these chains in order to fulfill an activity. Figure 2 below presents the connections of the different roles.



**Figure 2.** aRGENTeaM Workflow

#### 4.2.3. Membership of the group

In general terms, the interviewees say that the first contact with the forum was due to their interest in specific audiovisual material. They knew about the existence of the group through Internet research for subtitles for a specific movie or series; but as there was a language barrier, given the fact that the original was in English, they required a subtitle file. All of the participants stated that they became regular users of the website because they felt that the quality of the subtitles produced within the group was good. Participant 2 said:

Me registré en el 2007 de pura casualidad buscando el subtítulo de alguna película. [...] Lo que sí noté de entrada es que *los subtítulos eran muy buenos*

comparando con los de otros sitios. No me había puesto a pensar que los subtítulos eran hechos por varios usuarios organizados, hasta que vi la sección de series en traducción y *pasó un tiempo* entre que lo vi y me decidí a pedir una parte, porque si bien sé inglés no sabía si me alcanzaría como para traducir. [my emphasis]

As it is indicated on the above quote, the interviewed members first started as users that were interested in getting involved in the production process and, in response to these interests, they were subsequently invited to join the team. Participant 3 manifests:

Entré en el 2004 buscando series. [...] Pasaron dos años. En ese ínterin yo posteaba otras series, buscaba información, me empecé a preocupar por buscar data sobre series, posteaba... No sé, empecé a estar informado sobre lo que pasaba en Estados Unidos con las series que también fue el boom de la televisión estadounidense en ese momento. Y, bueno, de ahí yo, no vinculado a la traducción, me nombraron moderador para los foros de series y a poco me fui involucrando con las traducción.

Participant 5 presented similar arguments. The first contact with the group was as a regular user looking for subtitles; after that, there was a connection created by a perception of good quality subtitles. Finally, he integrated to the group of subtitle production, but still as a regular user, not yet as member of the staff:

En el 2005 aproximadamente me interesé por el tema de bajar películas, más que nada sabiendo que siempre, o casi siempre, salían antes que en alquiler y por ese entonces era de mirar muchas pelis. Al principio no estaba registrado. [...] Cuando noté la diferencia que había entre subtítulos bajados de otros sitios y los del foro, muchas veces enojado por quedarme a mitad de película con subtítulos que no correspondían por la sincronización u otros problemas, me registré y solo bajaba cosas que tenían subtítulos del team. [...] Ahí, solo bajaba, agradecía y nada más. Luego, viajé [...] donde vive toda mi familia. Me aburría tanto que me sentaba horas en la PC y de ahí que pasaba más tiempo dentro del foro. Es ahí cuando arranque con el tema de postear películas. [...] En el 2008, en

agosto y después de tener unos cuantos subtítulos encima. También de tener muchas publicaciones de películas y sobre todo, de orientar a otros usuarios fue que me pusieron de moderador.

#### 4.2.4. *Process and responsibilities*

The interviews make evident three different types of processes within the group. We will name these processes as follows: administrative process, moderation process and translation process.

The administrators are involved in the *administrative process*. They are in charge of managing the economic resources and defining strategies to fund the website. Further, based on the recommendations and comments of the users, they decide and organize the series that will be translated and they upgrade the membership of registered users to staff members according to the user interactions and performance on the forums.

The *moderation process* involves moderators and collaborators. Their main function is to keep the threads organized by making sure that comments are posted on the appropriate thread and moving to the garbage bin the posts that are not longer useful. They have to be attentive to the fulfillment of the forum rules and they should identify and inform about any infringement. Moderators and collaborators are also able to post the ripped material to the forums. Orientation and training are also activities in this process: the staff members should be willing to guide new members and prospective staff members in the aspects related to the forum organization and rules. Each forum session has a moderator or a group of moderators that are in charge of that specific session and their activity is primarily restricted to that area. There are also global moderators that have the possibility to moderate any session.

The *translation process* involves the junior translators, the translators and the revisers. The revisers coordinate the translation projects and perform the revising stage of the translations. They obtain the subtitle in English and the video (both are found online, from other groups that perform similar activities in the United States or the United Kingdom) and verify the synchronization. Then they divide the subtitle file into different files, each containing between 80 and 100 lines. After that, they prepare a post

announcing the availability of these subtitles and the need for translators to provide the first version, the raw translation. Translators voluntarily sign up for a piece or several pieces (one at a time) and, once their translation is finished, they send the file to the reviser. The reviser then puts together all the pieces and corrects the translation. When the translation is ready, the reviser prepares the pack and posts it (in accordance with the format presented in Appendix 9.2.) to the private section. Finally, a moderator takes the post from the private section and moves it to the public section. Sometimes, the reviser is also a moderator, so the post goes directly into the appropriate public section in the forum.

#### 4.2.5. Training

As is elaborated in 5.1.5 below, learning is one of the aims of the forum. Interviewees related to both the moderation process and the translation process mentioned the training cooperation as part of their activity. Participant 2 pointed out the existence of the role of *pre-revisers*. These members are translators that are expected to become revisers, so they are assigned to the functions of a reviser but their production is supported by a reviser, who serves as support to clarify doubts and confirm the process. Once the reviser is certain of the capabilities of a pre-reviser, the latter is awarded reviser status. Participant 2 describes the process as follows:

El precorrector es un usuario que tiene el rol de "traductor", es decir quien pide una parte para hacer de 100 líneas aproximadamente, la traduce y se la envía al corrector. Al transformarse en precorrector pasa del otro lado del mostrador: busca una sincronización en inglés, divide las partes, las reparte entre quienes traducen, las recibe, las corrige y le envía el sub corregido al "corrector" que es quien le da la mirada final y publica el subtítulos.

Training is also present on the side of the moderation process. Participant 5 argued that ripped subtitles posted by general users are always checked once they are posted. Besides, the description of the process followed by the group with this type of members was also described in the interview by presenting a previous experience:

Uno de esos días y ya formando una costumbre entrar al foro un par de horas casi a diario. También ya de a poco, orientaba o usuarios con lo que había aprendido,

contestaba casi como si fuera moderador, explicaba donde pedir los subtítulos, como bajar la película etc. Uno de esos días, ofrecieron un subpack en uno de los post de una peli. El subtítulo lo hice y lo envié. [...] Bueno, a partir de ese día, todos los subtítulos de pelis para nada conocidas me los pasaban. Me hacían una devolución a tener en cuenta para el próximo subtítulo.

#### *4.2.6. Visibility*

As can be seen in the templates included in Appendix 3, the nicknames of the translators and the reviser that participate in every translation are included in the post announcing the availability of the subtitle. Participant 4 confirmed this during the interview:

Hay foros donde se publica el subtítulo, subtítulos de series, por ejemplo, House, temporada 7. Se van publicando los subtítulos. Se publica el subtítulo número 1, se ponen los traductores que participaron en la traducción y el corrector.

A reference to the recognition and visibility of the roles performed by each forum member is also part of the profile page of the staff members. The roles are indicated right under the name and different colors are used to identify different roles. When asked about how to identify the role of a staff member, participant 4 answered:

Cada uno tiene su [rol] debajo de su nombre. Por ejemplo, debajo del nombre tienen, aparte de identificarse con el color, [como] el moderador que es marrón.

The members of the forum also confirm the importance that they give to the recognition of their labor. On this regard, participant 4 also pointed out that the normal behavior of users is as follows:

Entonces después todo el mundo agradece y dice si ve algún error o algo, lo va diciendo. Normalmente gracias, que están súper bien y tal. Que vale la pena la espera.

And, when discussing about the general situation of the forum and the perception the users have of their activity, participant 5 added: “Me encanta [...] que te den un gracias por algo que no te cuesta nada,” and “A nosotros nos pone muy contentos

cuando el foro es reconocido”. Participant 2 also referred to the satisfaction of visibility from the non-professional subtitler perspective:

Desde lo vinculado a los subtítulos, el foro me ha aportado muchas cosas buenas, el consumo de subtítulos, *la satisfacción de traducir algo y verlo publicado*. (my emphasis)

#### 4.2.7. *Time invested*

The time invested in the forum activities is highly variable from one user to another. Most of them coincided in stating that they invest more time in the forum during the weekends because during the week days they have work or study. Participant 2, for example, reported signing up every day for several hours, not necessarily interacting but in order to be aware of what is going on the forum. Participants 1 and 4 reported spending between 2 and 3 hours per day, although participant 1 was normally on the forum on Sundays, all day long. Participant 4 logged onto the forum every day but was more active on weekends. And, finally, participant 5 reported investing about 10 hours every day to perform activities related to the group.

#### 4.2.8. *Motivations*

The first aspect that was pointed out regarding the motivations of the interviewees to integrate and start collaborating in the team was the perception of *good* quality that they had of the subtitles produced by aRGENTeaM (see 5.2.3.). They found the forum due to a search of subtitles for audiovisual material, the first interest, but the feeling of satisfaction produced by the subtitles motivated them to become part of the production group. For instance, participant 5 affirmed that the interaction in the forum produced a change in him and that after a time of doing subtitles, he found that that “llegó un momento que prefería sentarme a realizar subtítulos que a mirar una película”. Participant 4 sums up the main motivation of people to integrate to the team and to continue doing this activity:

Tienes gente que quiere aprender a traducir, gente que tiene mucho tiempo libre y quiere estar con gente conocida o quiere estrechar lazos de filiación con otros, o... gente que quiere compartir intereses comunes, por ejemplo. Pero más o menos, gira en torno a esto: en hacer un pasatiempo y en el aprendizaje.

On these grounds, the non-professional translator group can be understood as a learning space, as a hobby (or a source of entertainment) and as a community. As a learning community, there are also different perspectives. On the one hand, there is the argument of Participant 1, an undergraduate translation student, who argues that the forum helps him in two ways: to satisfy his interests in movies and to provide training in audiovisual translation, which he would like to work in after graduating from university:

Me cayó de yapa por mi gusto por las pelis y, supongo, por mi buena disposición para contestar, ya que yo con las traducciones estoy más que contento. [Elijo las traducciones] por tener algo que traducir. Yo lo considero todo como práctica, y cada vez me doy más cuenta cómo puedo complementar cosas del foro con la carrera y, obviamente, muchas más cosas de la carrera con el foro. [...] [Me motivan] las traducciones en sí. Una vez recibido, me gustaría poder dedicarme al subtitulado o bien a traducciones literarias.

On the other hand, other users are English-language learners and see the group activity as an environment where they can practice and improve their English. Participant 4 stated:

Paralelamente [a la integración al grupo] empecé a estudiar inglés, aquí, [...] en la Escuela Oficial de Idiomas y, bueno, por un lado estudiando inglés y por otro lado practicando el inglés con las traducciones...

Other members not only consider the language improvements but also take into account the personal growth that comes from interacting in the group. In this respect, participant 2 said that “[e]l proceso ha sido de crecimiento constante, he notado de manera personal muchos avances en mi inglés gracias a esto de argenteam.” In the case of this participant, for instance, it is more important to translate something related to personal interests than to translate something with the unique goal of participating in a translation, regardless of the topic: “en mi caso solamente corrijo cosas que me gustan, a veces me llevo un chasco con alguna serie que termina siendo mala”.



Interviewed members also recognize the value of the forum as a source of entertainment and fun. Participant 1 stated that the degree of commitment with this activity will prevail as long as it does not become a job by saying that:

Para mí el foro es una diversión y un cable a tierra, como te dije más arriba. El día que se convierta en trabajo y llegue a pesarme, dudo que lo pueda seguir manteniendo. O sea, no es mi idea que se convierta en una pesadez.

Participant 2 also pointed out the enjoyment produce by the act of sharing. She argued that the fun part was not only to carry out a translation, but also to know that the product will be of use and help other people:

Digamos que ante la posibilidad tecnológica de disponer del video se torna necesario contar con el sub en español para poder verlo. Ahora, uno podría hacerlo y guardárselo para uno, pero ahí es donde creo que radica lo mejor de todo esto, uno lo hace para disfrutarlo uno y que lo disfruten otros, donde la retribución es el gracias que dejan en el foro.

Another interesting issue was brought into discussion by participant 3: the status of *knowledge* as a good that should be available to people in general. The argument presented by this participant was: “Pienso que se debe poner al mayor alcance posible de la gente en general las series y películas”. Participant 5 summarized most of the aspects related to this activity as a source of entertainment and fulfillment:

Me encanta. Me da placer ver los resultados cuando algo está terminado. Me gusta mucho enseñar. Me gusta compartir, ver al otro contento y que te lo demuestre, que te den un “gracias” por algo que no te cuesta nada o solo un rato de tu tiempo. Por eso te decía: mirar una peli o hacer un subtítulo. Me gusta más hacer el subtítulo. Me gusta más publicar una película o modificar cosas en el foro para que se vean mejores y más prolijas.

The excerpt above is related to the last characteristic that motivates people to participate in aRGENTeaM: the community. Participant 4 says that the relation between some of the members goes further that only contact through the web:

La gente se encuentra, por ejemplo, para ir al cine. Más ahora con esto de las nuevas tecnologías: Twitter, Facebook, yo qué sé... La gente tiene otros vínculos más allá del foro. Antes, el punto en común era el foro. Ahora ya como que se supera eso.

Participant 3 also talks about a type of group identity that is developed by the participation in the group and that holds them together, even in aspects not related to the forum:

Tiene que ver con la identidad. [...] Con la identidad de pertenecer a un grupo. Hay gente que se siente muy bien trabajando con otros, con compañeros. En este caso, se hacen amigos dentro del foro.

Participant 2 also comments on this aspect of the interaction between members of the forum and the support that is offered to them through the interaction:

En lo humano me ha hecho conocer gente muy copada, algunos se han transformado en amigos aunque a algunos no los conozco personalmente. Que se sume gente nueva al foro, eso me gusta. [...] El foro es una compañía, traducir te distrae, corregir mucho más. Cuando me peleé con mi ex, ¿adónde caí? Al foro. Y te puedo contar de mucha gente a la que le pasa lo mismo.

## **5. Discussion**

In this section, the analysis of the material at our disposal and the theoretical background will allow us to evaluate the data in three different ways:

Procedural aspects

Sociological aspects

Collaborative aspects

An analysis of the material related to these three aspects will allow us to draw a portrait of the group activity, giving us the chance to understand the mechanism of the

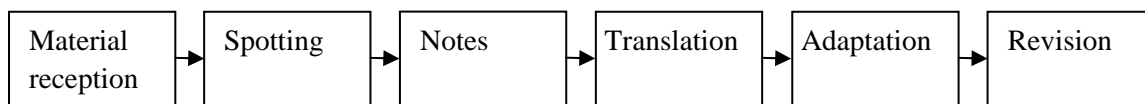
the non-professional subtitling team under study and what motivates the members of this group to continue with this activity.

### 5.1. Procedural aspects

Contrary to the popular belief in forums and informal translation discussion, the non-professional subtitling group under study is not an unstructured organization prodded by sporadic interventions. The fact that they are organized in a structured and defined manner demonstrates the degree of commitment and the importance they give to the activity they perform. From the data collected, it is possible to conclude that the aRGENTeaM community replicates the organization that is commonly considered appropriate in professional subtitling settings. Díaz Cintas (2003: 75-81) in his seminal work on subtitling theory and practice, describes the general process of subtitling, including all the stages from the commission to the transmission, the Figure 3 shows the stages from the material reception until the revision:

If we compare this set of stages to the stages described by the Participants during the interviews, we will find that, under the specific conditions of non-professional subtitling, the same stages are followed in order to produce the subtitled file. About the revision stage, Díaz Cintas points out that:

En esta fase de revisión, es altamente recomendable que una persona distinta al traductor tome parte en la misma, ya que, como recoge la sabiduría popular, cuatro ojos ven mejor que dos. Aunque ideal, esta etapa suele ser ignorada por muchos estudios y compañías de subtitulación, ya que implica un aumento de los costes. (2003: 82)



**Figure 3.** Subtitling process adapted from Díaz Cintas, 2003.

The claim made by Díaz Cintas and the comment he made about the limited cases when this happens is the complete opposite case of the situation in aRGENTeaM. In this group, all the subtitles are reviewed by a person different from the translator; the difference is that the non-professional first version is done by a group of translators

instead of just one translator. Descriptions of both processes and the descriptive explanation provided by Díaz Cintas demonstrate that the professional and non-professional subtitling processes do not differ greatly, considering the stages and agents involved in every process.

In a more prescriptive approach and aimed at establishing a European subtitling standard, the European Association for Studies in Screen Translation promulgated in 1998 the *Code of Good Subtitling Practice*. The code is based on the arguments presented in Ivarsson's and Carroll's (1998) book *Subtitling*, which looks systematically at the techniques of subtitling and became a mandatory reading in the area.

The code contains 26 recommendations that need to be fulfilled in accordance with the appropriate subtitling practice. Appendix 6 presents a table with the instructions described by the code and reports if these instructions are taken into account in the guidelines established by the non-professional subtitling team. After our analysis of the Code and aRGENTeaM's guidelines, our findings show that the group includes explicitly 19 out of the total 26 standards established by the subtitling code (See Appendix 6: Code of Good Subtitling and aRGENTeaM guidelines comparison). The guideline of the non-professional subtitling group is accordingly to the code in aspects related to orthotypography, time on screen, segmentation and language register and tone considerations. The aspects not included are more related to in-depth understanding of the film and subtitle relation, highly technical aspects and guides that require a profound meta-language in order to understand and handle the more detailed aspects of the profession. Nevertheless, the Code is not completely applicable to professional subtitling either. One of the Code points states: "Wherever two lines of unequal length are used, the upper line should preferably be shorter to keep as much of the image as free as possible and in left-justified subtitles in order to reduce unnecessary eye movement." Neither professional nor non-professional subtitles follow this rule strictly. Subtitles are normally centered, unless the utterance corresponding to each line belongs to two different speakers.

The findings are also interesting with respect to visibility. The *Code* was published in 1998 and it manifests that a good translation practice should recognize the name of the translator and organization in charge of the production of the subtitles.

Although currently it is common to see the name of the subtitle producer on television shows, this practice is relatively new on professional subtitling. Contrary to this is the visibility question on the non professional area, the non-professional translation documentation and interviews point out that the non-professional subtitle files always include the name of the group at the end and the nicknames of the people involved in the production are posted on the forum thread.

### *5.2 Sociological aspects*

In general terms, out of the four types of capitals included in the present study, the less represented capital is the economic capital, as the group performs a volunteer activity and they do not receive a direct monetary reward. It is important to point out here that the monetary reward is not *direct* but that they indeed have opportunities to receive economic recourses. The symbolic capital of the group as subtitler provider is high. The interviewees recognize that they decided to join the group due to a trust developed on the quality of the subtitle offered. The same way that new users decide to trust the quality of the translation, people and companies sporadically post job offers to the group forums. However, these posts are not replied to by the group as such, the person who needs the subtitles is contacted by the staff members as individuals.

In relation to the social capital, the fact that the group is organized hierarchically allows the interpretation of it as a community with set rules and a structured communication mechanism. Integration into the group is seen as the creation of an identity within a community and it is important to point out here that staff members see the promotion within the forum as rewards for their activities and their commitment with the objectives established in the forum.

The social interaction in the group starts with the assignation of a membership and promotion is according to the commitment and participation of the users. For the ones who are interested in developing relationships, the group turns into a private space where they can share interests and personal issues more than simply interacting in the subtitle production process. In some situations, and where the geographical restrictions permit it, the contact progress from virtually to reality and people set appointments to share in more traditional spaces, like restaurants and cinemas. Regarding the sharing

and learning environment that is promoted depends highly, almost entirely, on the social attitude of the members, they should be willing to interact in order to give impulse to the common interests. On this aspect, it was very interesting to find that members develop a deep sense of responsibility toward the users. They feel personal satisfaction when they notice that users are thankful of the products they are delivering and, then, they develop a responsibility sense to keep on producing the subtitles for the users. This is more common with series translation since users tend to follow the series and, at the same time, the group that produces the subtitles they are using.

What happens with the cultural capital on the forum is a very interesting phenomenon. When users decide to cross the barrier and start collaborating in the forum, they often bring with them different types of knowledge. First and foremost, they have an interest in audiovisual material, whether they are series or films. This is the common starting point. Further, they require having technological knowledge or willingness to learn the technological aspects needed to participate in the forum and, in the case of translators, a linguistic knowledge which allows them to produce translations. The findings regarding the embodied cultural capital after integration into the group are very interesting. The interviewed participants who participate in the translation or ripping processes stated that, at some point after they had been working in the group, they started to prefer translating movies or producing ripped subtitles than watching movies subtitled by the group. The new cultural capital that they acquired during their activities in the group changed radically their source of interests and entertainment and they started to find more fulfillment in the production part of the group than the consumption part. Participant 5 stated:

Me gusta compartir, ver al otro contento y que te lo demuestre, que te den un “gracias” por algo que no te cuesta nada o solo un rato de tu tiempo. Por eso te decía: mirar una peli o hacer un subtítulo. Me gusta más hacer el subtítulo. Me gusta más publicar una película o modificar cosas en el foro para que se vean mejores y más prolijas.

Finally, the findings account for, perhaps, the strongest capital of the group: the symbolic capital. As explained by Bourdieu, the symbolic capital is basically the recognition of other types of capitalization as a value of prestige or a status conferred by

a third party that is aware of the circumstances of the capital holders. If we consider that only 180 members are part of the staff and that there are 481,899 registered users, then we can conclude that a considerable number of people are using the subtitles, even more if we take into account that to download subtitles it is not necessary to register on the website and that every user decides on that aspect.

There are two factors that play an important part in the construction of the symbolic capital of this non-professional subtitling: tradition and quality. On the one hand, the group has been online and without any deactivation for nine years now, so their presence on the Internet has been widely known. Besides, they have received attention from other media, like the article published in *Rolling Stones Argentina* online on 2009 by Leonardo Ferri. On the other hand, as was stated by the interviewees, the users of the forum consider that the subtitles produced by aRGENTeaM are of good quality, better than the ones offered by other non-professional subtitling communities.

However, there is something missing in Bourdieu's theory that would be necessary to completely understand the motivations of non-professional subtitlers. Most of the interviewees stated that they mainly do non-professional subtitles because they feel *happy* when producing something that will be of use to other people and that they feel *satisfaction* when this people thank them for their work. Furthermore, they argued that, for them, entertainment is the driving force to work in the group because they have *fun* while working there. Unfortunately, Bourdieu does not offer a theoretical tool that might be useful to analyze this situation. He states that:

Guided by one's sympathies and antipathies, affections and aversion, tastes and distastes, one makes for oneself an environment in which one feels 'at home' and in which one can achieve the fulfillment of one's desire to be which one identifies with happiness. (Bourdieu 2000: 150)

There is happiness in an activity which exceeds the visible profits—wage, prize or reward—and which consists in the fact of emerging from indifference (or depression), being occupied, projected towards and feeling oneself objectively, and therefore subjectively, endowed with a social mission. To be expected, solicited, overwhelmed with obligations and commitments is not only to be

snatched from solitude or insignificance, but also to experience, in the most continuous and concrete way, the feeling of counting for others, being important for them, and therefore in oneself, and finding in the permanent plebiscite of testimonies of interest—requests, expectations, invitations—a kind of continuous justification for existing. (ibid. 240)

Although he presents happiness as an element in these excerpts, Bourdieu's conception of happiness remains at the individual level. In our case, this conception of happiness and the feeling of importance do not cover the elements we need in order to analyze the feeling expressed by the interviewees as resulting from the activity. The participants pointed to *happiness* and *fun* as a very important element in the decision making process about their integration to the group. Due to this important fact, it becomes then necessary to complement Bourdieu's theory with another theory that might help to understand how happiness might be related to the volunteer activity and the constant commitment of non-professional agents.

### 5.3. Collaborative aspects

The collaborative translation model has been brought into play thanks to the advancement of Web 2.0 and consumer empowerment. O'Hagan, who has been working on the impact of user-generated translation as a possible strategy for crowdsourcing, published in 2008 an article related to the study of fan translation networks as *accidental* training environments. She concludes that:

Despite a number of errors, the fan translation was in general found to be beyond the work of a novice in the sense that it presented and reflected the global concerns beyond the lexical and grammatical level (despite some errors in this respect). (2008: 176)

The pillar of the non-professional translation community is the sharing of knowledge. Revisers have to be willing to guide translators and moderators need to be keen to provide assistance to regular users and users who want to become part of the group. At this stage, we can only assure that the communication and interaction model



of the group under study promoted the collaboration and takes advantages of the knowledge of the senior users and the desire to learn of the junior users.

The translation process is not only supported by experienced users, but also by the technological tools that have been developed or adapted within the group. Further, based on the hierarchical order presented in 4.2.2, it is evident that the process is organized and the functions of every role are assigned according to the abilities that are expected from the person that occupies that role. The combination of members' abilities, the previous knowledge and support that is offered by peers, and the reference data storage at the group forum, invites us to assume that the result of a production process like this might be similar to that described on O'Hagan results, although further quality studies will be necessary to confirm this.

## **6. Expected Benefits**

Translation is advancing towards a drastic re-organization of the profession as we know it. Soon, translation as the area of study and labor where we cohabite today will no longer exist. The new models of translation are consolidating themselves as viable and lucrative strategies. In the audiovisual translation area, crowdsourcing is starting to become important. The translation model used by TED has been successful. Using a crowdsourcing model, they have been able to produce more than 19,000 translations into 81 languages (as of June 14, 2011: <http://www.ted.com/OpenTranslationProject>). The TED platform is powered by dotSUB a subtitling and subtitling software development company which is starting to have an impact on the subtitling field and that is furiously promoting crowdsourcing as the more obvious step of collaborative subtitling. In the general field of technical translation, post-editing is getting stronger as a strategy to reduce costs and produce translations faster. Even against the resistance of some translators and translation communities, it has gained an important place among today's translation issues.

These two advancements in translation schemas pose a doubt: how could professional subtitling become a crowdsourcing activity where non-professional translators produce a first raw translation version and professional translators will be

dealing with post-editing? Would a model like this work? If a model of crowdsourcing applied to subtitling proves useful, then it should be possible to reduce the time required to produce subtitles. The issue here would be to find a strategy that convinces people to participate in the raw translation process. That would require an exchange of goods or benefits. Luis von Ahn, professor at the Carnegie Mellon University and one of the pioneers of crowdsourcing projects, is now developing Duolingo, presented at the TEDxCMU in 2011. Von Ahn's project is to translate the web into major languages by using volunteer translation. He wants to have "100 million people translate the web into every major language for free." He designed a platform where people can learn English for free, just by investing their time. As part of the learning process, people will be asked to translate short passages. These short passages are real parts of the web. Various versions of the same passage are combined to get the one version with the quality of that of a *professional translator version*.

There are two conditions that need to be fulfilled in order to future benefit and progress on crowdsourcing as an audiovisual translation strategy: (1) More research on non-professional subtitling proves that there is a valuable and viable resource to include in professional translation subtitling, and (2) a retribution model needs to be established to pay back to the people involved in the collaborative translation. It is possible that a crowdsourcing model of audiovisual translation will lead to a reduction in the time invested in the production of professional subtitles and this might prompt a change in the organization and importance of subtitling. Translation agencies and companies who are always demanding fast and good translation may be highly interested in new models that offer these option without significant alteration of the monetary investments.

## **7. Future Studies**

First and foremost, it is important to point out that, as was explained in section 3, the present minor dissertation is a part of a bigger project that will be submitted in fulfillment of the requirements of the Doctorate in Translation and Intercultural Studies. The results presented here are based on the data collected through interviews and documentary sources only, but to obtain the complete picture of the non-professional subtitling group activity it will be necessary to confirm the quality of the subtitles

produced by the group by using empirical methods. Although findings show a concordance between the Code of Good Subtitling and the professional subtitling process, and the aRGENTeaM activity, it is necessary to confirm that these instructions and process are evenly and regularly applied to the real process of subtitle production. This will be done by the development of the corpus study proposed in 3.3.

Furthermore, research on non-professional subtitling needs to be done in other language pairs. The study of the phenomenon in different linguistic settings will offer a more general understanding of the situation and will perhaps shed some light on the different types of motivation that are involved in every non-professional subtitling production group. Larger studies with cooperation from non-professional subtitling groups in different language pairs may provide more generalizable results that will allow us to obtain insight in the translation strategies and activity of these groups.

As was proposed in the previous section, if non-professional subtitling activity proves to be a reliable source of raw translation material, then integration between professional and non-professional subtitling need to be explored. Applying new methods might provide tools to make the companies and the translation providers more competent and effective. The combination of professional and non-professional resources may be of interest to the changing and demanding translation market.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://foro.argenteam.net/viewtopic.php?f=50&t=124949> [Posted on February 14, 2009]

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## 8. Appendixes

### 9.1. Appendix 1: About aRGENTeaM<sup>1</sup>

¿Qué es aRGENTeaM?

**aRGENTeaM** es una comunidad virtual reunida alrededor del interés común por las series televisivas, películas y artes audiovisuales en general. Específicamente, *es una comunidad de práctica y aprendizaje*, con el objetivo de practicar y aprender el inglés y el subtulado, y perfeccionar las especificidades del castellano, la lengua que nos es común, todo ello aplicado a esas producciones audiovisuales.

La finalidad de **aRGENTeaM** es facilitar y generar prácticas de aprendizaje informal, pero por otro lado es un espacio en el cual los amantes de series y películas pueden reunirse y compartir sus experiencias y emociones, así como toda la información sobre esas expresiones artísticas.

El trabajo del equipo de traducción de **aRGENTeaM** redundará en un producto que puede disfrutar toda la comunidad, de manera libre y gratuita. El producto final de estas traducciones queda alojado en este sitio para uso exclusivo y personal de aquellos que lo deseen.

La comunidad **aRGENTeaM** es una comunidad abierta para todo aquel que quiera participar, previo registro. Todo el que quiera puede participar libremente. Por otro lado, está conformada por un staff fijo de colaboradores, al cual se puede acceder mediante las buenas prácticas, los intereses de los usuarios y las necesidades de la comunidad.

Es importante destacar que **a toda la información** que los usuarios puedan obtener en este foro, sólo podrá dársele un **uso privado y personal**. La utilización fuera de estos términos queda bajo exclusiva responsabilidad de aquellos que así opten por hacerlo.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://foro.argenteam.net/viewtopic.php?f=63&t=148616#p3215349> [Poste don March 15, 2011]

## 9.2. Appendix 2: DivxPack posting templates

Template for new subtitles:

### Plantilla de ejemplo para nuevos subs

Nuevo subtítulo:

Two and a Half Men 601 - "Taterhead Is Our Love Child"

[Image]

Traducción:

superBOB

Antonio Dávalos

Locura

FLAm3

&

syst3m

Corrección:

superBOB

Versión: HDTV.XviD-XOR

[url=XXX]BAJAR SUBTÍTULO[/url]



Or, template for a compilation of subtitles:

👉 Episodio 601: *Taterhead Is Our Love Child*

[Image]

👉 Traducción: superBOB, Antonio Dávalos, Locura, FLAm3 & syst3m.

👉 Corrección: superBOB.

👉 [url=XXX]BAJAR SUBTÍTULO[/url]

👉 Versión: HDTV.XviD-XOR

👉 Sincro: superBOB.

👉 [url=XXX]BAJAR SUBTÍTULO[/url]

👉 Versión: DVDRip.XviD-SAiNTS

### *9.3. Appendix 3: General index of aRGENTeaM forum*

- aRGENTeaM reglas y novedades

aRGENTeaM Reglas generales y anuncios

Foro general

Dto. de traducción y corrección

- aRGENTeaM películas

Subtítulos de películas

Películas en traducción

Pedidos de subtítulos

Packs DVDRip (2000-)

Packs DVDRip (-1999)

Packs de otras calidades

Críticas y comentarios de cine

- aRGENTeaM HD

General HD

Packs BR-Rips

- aRGENTeaM TV series

Subtítulos de series

Series en traducción

Packs de series

Series fullpacks

Críticas y comentarios de series

- aRGENTeaM documentales y cortos

Subtítulos de docus y cortos

Docus y cortos en traducción

Documentales

Documentales de TV

Cortos

- aRGENTeaM DVD±R

General DVD±R

Packs DVD±R

Parches DVD±R

- aRGENTeaM Misceláneas

Yerbas

Juegos y trucos

Mesa de ayuda

Tutoriales y software

Full albums

- El pochoclero

Charlas en general

Tacho

- Translation team

General translation y mods

Debates de traducciones

Traducciones privadas

Películas privadas

TV series privadas

Subtítulos

Votaciones

#### 9.4. Appendix 4: Subtitle Workshop setup<sup>2</sup>

## ¿Cómo ajustar el *Subtitle Workshop* a las reglas de aRGENTeaM?

Bajamos e instalamos la versión **Subtitle Workshop 2.51** de acá: <http://www.urusoft.net/downloads.php?lang=2>

También se encuentra subido a aRGENTeaM Dropbox ya configurado y listo para usar.

Pero aprendamos a configurarlo nosotros mismos.

Antes de continuar hay que descomprimir y agregar los siguientes archivos a nuestra carpeta de instalación del Subtitle Workshop.

El archivo **aRGENTeaM.ocr** es el script original del SW, adaptado a las *Reglas de Traducción aRGENTeaM* de modo que no tome ciertas cosas como errores OCR. También se le agregó varias cosas más, entre otras, que detecte varias onomatopeyas como errores, lo cual sirve para corregir subs rípeados (según las Reglas de Traducción, las onomatopeyas no van). Este archivo se descomprime y se agrega, por defecto (si no cambiaron la dirección al instalarlo), en `C:\Archivos de programa\URUSoft\Subtitle Workshop\OCRScrip`

#### 📁 aRGENTeaM.zip

*Script OCR. Última versión 24/03/10.*  
(2.17 KB) 116 veces

El archivo **Español.lng** contiene el idioma español para usar el SW. En el archivo por defecto que instala el SW hay varias traducciones mal hechas que justo pertenecen al tema de configuración. Reemplazar este archivo por el original en la carpeta por defecto: `C:\Archivos de programa\URUSoft\Subtitle Workshop\Langs`

#### 📁 Español.zip

*Idioma español modificado.*  
(8.08 KB) 101 veces

Comenzamos con la configuración.

**1-** Pinchamos en **Configuración > Configuración:**

---

<sup>2</sup> <http://foro.argenteam.net/viewtopic.php?f=50&t=138207> [March 24, 2010]



(clic en la imagen para agrandar)

Y modificamos estas dos pestañas para dejarlas con las siguientes opciones marcadas:



#### a) General

- Permitir más de una instancia del programa ejecutándose
- Buscar automáticamente la película
- Mantener el orden de las líneas al revertir el texto
- Seleccionar el texto al saltar a la siguiente línea
- Seleccionar el texto al saltar a la línea previa
- Trabajar con tags de estilo

#### b) General > Avanzado

- Ajuste de líneas inteligente: 40 caracteres
- Dividir líneas: 40 caracteres
  - Ajustar líneas automáticamente
- Longitud máxima de líneas: 40 caracteres

**2-** Más tarde, entramos en Herramientas > Información y errores > Configuración:



Después, como hemos hecho anteriormente, modificamos los valores y marcamos lo siguiente:



#### a) General

- Mostrar confirmaciones en el formulario principal al corregir errores
- Marcar errores en la lista principal
  - Negrita
- Script OCR: aRGENTeaM



#### b) Avanzado

- Caracteres prohibidos: \*
- Caracteres que no se pueden repetir: ¡!¿?";\/\_[]=
- Tolerancia para subtítulos repetidos: 0 milisegundos (o pónganle un número menor a 100)
- Espacio después de caracteres: -
- Duración máxima por línea: 6000 milisegundos
- Duración mínima por línea: 1000 milisegundos
- Línea demasiado larga: 41 caracteres



#### c) Chequear

Seleccionamos absolutamente todo.





**d) Corregir**

Sólo dejamos seleccionado "Espacios innecesarios".

El resto suelen dar problemas al corregir automáticamente. Siempre es mejor tomarse unos minutos y hacerlo a mano. 😊



**e) Espacios innecesarios**

- Marcamos todo

Y luego le damos aceptar.

**3-** Con esto configurado, cada vez que vayamos a traducir una parte, al acabar pinchamos en Herramientas > Información y errores > Información y errores (octrl+i):



Y el programa nos indicará qué líneas contienen errores, ya sean OCR, líneas largas, duraciones mínimas, contienen espacios innecesarios, etc...

Algunos de estos errores, se corrigen automáticamente pinchando en Corregir errores:



Los demás no queda otra que corregirlos a mano. Si por ejemplo nos marca un error OCR que no nos damos cuenta por qué, hacemos que lo corrija automáticamente así vamos aprendiendo (Herramientas > Información y errores -> Configuración, pestaña Corregir y tildamos Errores OCR. Luego recordemos volverlo a destildar).

Al final, y si miramos el subtítulo, veremos cómo el SW nos marca aún líneas en rojo, aquellas con errores de tiempo, o de máximos caracteres permitidos, las cuales habrá que solucionar manualmente si tenemos un manejo básico de Subtitle Workshop (saber dividir líneas, ajustar tiempos, etc...) si no, en su defecto déjenlo y el corrector encargado lo corregirá. Pero en teoría, salvo casos muy especiales, al terminar con un subtítulo no nos debe marcar ningún error. El script aRGENTeaM se modificó para que no detecte errores innecesarios.

Luego de corregir los errores, al final, siempre le pasaremos el corrector ortográfico (obviamente, teniendo previamente instalado el Word en nuestro PC) yendo a Herramientas -> Revisar Ortografía, o simplemente presionando F7.

Recuerden que todo esto se hace para mejorar la calidad de los subtítulos y el tiempo que tardan en publicarse.  
Gracias.

### *9.5. Appendix 5: aRGENTeaM translation and revising guidelines<sup>3</sup>*

El equipo de **aRGENTeaM** presenta las nuevas **Reglas de traducción y corrección, versión 3.0**.

El documento es de lectura obligada para los traductores, lo que redundará en un subtítulo de excelencia gracias a la suma de los esfuerzos entre ustedes y los correctores.

Es de lectura simple y sugerimos tenerlo siempre a mano para consultar.

Otros posts que pueden ser de utilidad para mejorar nuestra práctica y aprendizaje se pueden encontrar en el **Dto. de Traducción y Corrección**. Allí también se pueden postear consultas, dudas, inquietudes, críticas, etc.

Y por supuesto, podemos recurrir a nuestro corrector o gente del staff de confianza para consultar todo lo que sea necesario.

## **aRGENTeaM - Reglas de traducción y corrección**

*El siguiente documento es una guía de estilo cuyo objetivo será normalizar las traducciones que hacemos en [www.aRGENTeaM.net](http://www.aRGENTeaM.net).*

*Su propósito no es repasar las reglas ortográficas del español, sino que apunta a definir los criterios que deben usarse para la mejor comprensión de los subtítulos tanto de películas como de series.*

*La primer parte irá dirigida a los traductores y la segunda a los correctores.*

*Ante todo debes saber que esto es un hobby para todos nosotros, lo cual no impide que seamos responsables y que tengamos en cuenta a quien espera las partes para corregirlas o a quienes esperan los subtítulos para poder ver una película. Si tienes algún problema con la entrega, por favor comunícate con el corrector, cuanto antes lo hagas, podremos resolver el problema con mayor rapidez.*

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<sup>3</sup> <http://foro.argenteam.net/viewtopic.php?f=90&t=148494> [Posted on March 6, 2011]

*La comunidad aRGENTeaM está compuesta por gente de diversas nacionalidades, y el español tiene modismos en todos lados. Para nuestros subtítulos utilizamos un español neutro, lo cual hará más sencilla la comprensión a todo el mundo. No se deben usar localismos.*

*Si no entiendes cómo traducir una línea, no te hagas problemas, déjale al lado tres asteriscos (\*\*\*) así no se le pasa la misma al corrector. Es preferible dejar líneas sin traducir a traducir algo de lo cual no estás seguro.*

**Siempre** se debe utilizar el corrector ortográfico del Subtitle Workshop o el Word, ya que a todo el mundo se le puede escapar un error. La función del corrector de la serie no es corregirte los acentos o las faltas de ortografía, sino unificar criterios entre todas las partes que recibe, revisar que la traducción sea fidedigna y también verificar gramática y ortografía.

*Por favor comprueba que lo que estás escribiendo tenga sentido, si traduces de manera literal y lo que escribes no tiene sentido al leerse, seguramente habrás interpretado mal el texto original. No está de más que recurras a Google para investigar frases que no conozcas.*

*Ante cualquier duda o si necesitas alguna ayuda, pregunta al corrector. También puedes postear tus dudas en el Dpto. de Traducción y Corrección, donde cualquier corrector del foro podrá resolverlas.*

## **Traductores**

**1.1** Todas las líneas deben terminar con su puntuación correspondiente en todos los casos.

8

00:00:18,800 --> 00:00:20,800

La muerte es la muerte → **Incorrecto**

8

00:00:18,800 --> 00:00:20,800

La muerte es la muerte. → **Correcto**

**1.2** Deben ponerse ambos signos de admiración (!) e interrogación (¿) al principio y final de cada frase.

4

00:00:09,930 --> 00:00:11,439

Estás diciendo que

sabes cómo encontrarlos? → **Incorrecto**

4

00:00:09,930 --> 00:00:11,439

¿Estás diciendo que

sabes cómo encontrarlos? → **Correcto**

201

00:14:35,400 --> 00:14:37,330

Entonces díganme lo que quiero saber! → **Incorrecto**

201

00:14:35,400 --> 00:14:37,330

¡Entonces díganme lo que quiero saber! → **Correcto**

**1.3** Si un personaje deja de hablar al ser interrumpido abruptamente por otro personaje o simplemente se detiene solo de manera cortante, usaremos dos guiones consecutivos sin espacios intermedios.

538

00:38:16,420 --> 00:38:20,050

Tuve que enviar a mi hijo a la isla,  
sabiendo muy bien lo que--

Si en cambio el personaje deja de hablar, pero da la impresión que la frase podría continuar, o refleja un titubeo o una duda, entonces lo representamos con tres puntos suspensivos (ni cuatro, ni cinco).

219

00:15:35,660 --> 00:15:37,630

Pero los reclutas de la semana pasada...

*Sólo en estos casos puede omitirse el signo de admiración o de pregunta de cierre. Si la frase estaba expresada en forma de pregunta y el personaje interrumpe sus dichos, abruptamente o no, es redundante poner el signo de cierre.*

403

00:32:59,880 --> 00:33:01,590

¿Por qué cambiarías de--? → **Incorrecto**

403

00:32:59,880 --> 00:33:01,590

¿Por qué cambiarías de-- → **Correcto**

**1.4** Para los casos en los cuales dos personajes hablen en la misma línea de subtítulo, cada frase debe comenzar con un guión y luego un espacio.

226

00:16:31,240 --> 00:16:33,020

- Entonces, ¿cuál es el plan de rescate?

- ¿Plan de rescate?

Asimismo, cuando habla sólo una persona **no se pone el guión.**

466

00:39:46,030 --> 00:39:47,680

- Sawyer me dejó ir. → **Incorrecto**

**1.5** Al final de una línea cuya frase no ha terminado y seguirá en la siguiente, se colocarán puntos suspensivos (...) y se comenzará la siguiente con los mismos puntos suspensivos (...) Cuando la línea termine en coma “,” en el texto original, esta debe reemplazarse por puntos suspensivos.

257

00:18:14,330 --> 00:18:17,230

Si Faraday dijo que hay que sacar  
a las personas de la isla...

258

00:18:20,660 --> 00:18:22,130  
...yo lo haría.

*Explicación:*

*Ya que este es un punto que trajo mucha discusión les dejamos una explicación del por qué de poner los tres puntos:*

*Puntos de terminación {...}: Se deben usar luego del último carácter de un subtítulo (sin espacios insertados), cuando la frase subtitulada no ha finalizado en una línea y debe continuar en la siguiente. Los tres puntos indican que la frase subtitulada no ha terminado, para que el ojo y el cerebro de los espectadores puedan esperar la aparición de nuevas líneas a continuación. La total ausencia de puntuación luego del último carácter de un subtítulo, como alternativa de indicar continuidad de la frase en el siguiente subtítulo no provee una señal tan obvia y por consiguiente el cerebro usa más tiempo para procesar la nueva línea que aparece de forma menos esperada.*

*Puntos de comienzo {...}: Tres puntos deben usarse antes del primer carácter de un subtítulo (sin espacios insertados detrás, el primer carácter en minúsculas), cuando este subtítulo lleva el texto de continuación de una oración anterior incompleta. Los tres puntos indican la llegada de una línea de subtítulo esperada, algo anticipado por la presencia de tres puntos finales en el subtítulo anterior. La ausencia de puntuación como alternativa de indicar la llegada de la parte restante de una oración subtitulada de forma incompleta no provee una señal tan obvia y por consiguiente el cerebro usa más tiempo para procesar la nueva línea relacionándolo con el anterior. Debido a su particular función como significadores de continuación de una frase, los puntos iniciales siempre deben usarse conjuntamente con los tres puntos de terminación.*

[Extracto de "A Proposed Set Of Subtitling Standards in Europe"](#)

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**1.6** Si dos personajes hablan alternativamente en dos líneas consecutivas, podemos mezclar los conceptos antes descriptos.

686

00:44:44,253 --> 00:44:47,183

- Pero es el territorio de Lundy...
- Pero él te escucha.

687

00:44:47,708 --> 00:44:51,096

- ...y no quiero interferir.
- ¿No eres su mano derecha?

## **2.1** Uso de las *itálicas*

Las *itálicas* se utilizan para voces en off (no olviden que fuera de cuadro –sin *itálicas*- no es fuera de escena –con *itálicas*-) y cualquier otra fuente de emisión de sonidos que no veamos en pantalla. Pueden ser radios, sonido emitido por una TV, altoparlantes, conversaciones telefónicas e incluso conversaciones entre dos personas que el protagonista oye. También cuando el personaje sueña o recuerda una situación vivida.

## **2.2** Carteles en pantalla

Los carteles que salen en pantalla, ya sean letras sobreimpresas o carteles en la imagen que tengan que ver con la trama deben escribirse en mayúsculas.

## **2.3** Notas

Las notas manuscritas o textos deben escribirse en minúsculas y en *itálicas*.

#### 2.4 Abreviaturas y siglas

Deben ir en mayúsculas y sin puntos de separación: **FBI, CIA, UNESCO, FMI**, etc.

#### 2.5 Canciones

En el caso de ser traducidas —esto debes acordarlo con el corrector— deben ir entre #, sin puntuación y en minúsculas. Si la canción suena en una radio se usarán las *itálicas*.

127

00:07:31,211 --> 00:07:33,827

# Por favor pon atención  
y escúchame #

128

00:07:34,213 --> 00:07:37,498

# Dame algo de tiempo  
para derribar al hombre #

#### 2.6 Nombres de programas televisivos y de películas, títulos de libros

Los nombres indicados van en *itálicas*. Estos nombres sólo se traducen si el programa o la película son más conocidos por su nombre en español.

#### 2.7 Nombres de personajes y de organizaciones

Los nombres de los personajes no se traducen. Los de organizaciones y empresas tampoco, salvo que los mismos sean conocidos por su nombre en español, y no van en *itálicas* ni entre comillas.

#### 2.8 Números

Los números se escribirán en letras del uno al diez, pero deberá tenerse especial cuidado de no mezclar letras y números en renglones cercanos.

Para los separadores de miles se utilizarán los puntos, y para los separadores de decimales las comas:

12,564.12 → **Incorrecto**

12.564,12 → **Correcto**

Nunca se escriben con puntos, comas ni blancos de separación los números referidos a años, páginas, versos, portales de vías urbanas, códigos postales, apartados de correos, números de artículos legales, decretos o leyes: año 2001, página 3142, código postal 28357.

En este apartado deberás usar el sentido común, y te guiarás por el largo de la línea.

#### 2.9 Uso de las comillas.

En textos con comillas o citas, sólo se deben poner al principio y al final del mismo, independientemente de las líneas que dicho párrafo abarque.

1

00:01:59,019 --> 00:02:02,808

Y Miguel De Cervantes dijo:  
"En un lugar de la Mancha...

2

00:01:59,019 --> 00:02:02,808

...de cuyo nombre  
no quiero acordarme...

3

00:01:59,019 --> 00:02:02,808

...no ha mucho tiempo que vivía un hidalgo...

4

00:01:59,019 --> 00:02:02,808

...de los de lanza en astillero,  
adarga antigua...

5

00:01:59,019 --> 00:02:02,808

...rocín flaco y galgo corredor".

Combinación con otros signos

a) Los signos de puntuación correspondientes al período en el que va inserto el texto entre comillas se colocan siempre después de las comillas de cierre:

Sus palabras fueron: "No lo haré"; pero al final nos ayudó.

¿De verdad ha dicho "hasta nunca"?

b) El texto que va dentro de las comillas tiene una puntuación independiente y lleva sus propios signos ortográficos. Por eso, si el enunciado entre comillas es interrogativo o exclamativo, los signos de interrogación y exclamación se escriben dentro de las comillas:

Le preguntó al conserje: "¿Dónde están los baños, por favor?".

"¿Qué ganas tengo de que lleguen las vacaciones!", exclamó.

*De esta regla debe excluirse el punto, que se escribirá detrás de las comillas de cierre cuando el texto entrecomillado ocupe la parte final de un enunciado o de un texto (→ c).*

c) Cuando lo que va entrecomillado constituye el final de un enunciado o de un texto, debe colocarse punto detrás de las comillas de cierre, incluso si delante de las comillas va un signo de cierre de interrogación o de exclamación, o puntos suspensivos:

"No está el horno para bollos". Con estas palabras zanjó la discusión y se marchó.

"¿Dónde te crees que vas?". Esa pregunta lo detuvo en seco.

"Si pudiera decirle lo que pienso realmente...". A Pedro no le resultaba fácil hablar con sinceridad.

**3.1** Las líneas no deben tener más de 40 caracteres. El programa que utilices para subtítular hará el trabajo por ti y te contará cuántos hayas usado. Si no sabes cortar líneas y no hay manera de que te entre lo que escribiste, déjale esta tarea al corrector.

**3.2** Cuando escribas una línea en dos renglones, procura hacer el corte de renglones dando prioridad a la fácil lectura contra la apariencia estética.

Separa las frases largas según las conjunciones. La propia voz muchas veces marca las separaciones mediante pausas o inflexiones. Separa las líneas o subtítulos haciéndolos coincidir con comas y puntos.

119

00:06:58,018 --> 00:07:00,957

La línea de ensamblaje en movimiento,  
fue introducida en 1908 por Henry Ford.

*Esto no siempre es posible de hacerse si tienes en cuenta el punto 3.1 así que daremos prioridad al largo de las líneas. No debes pasarte de los 40 caracteres.*

**3.3** Se usarán como máximo dos renglones por línea de subtítulo, no pueden usarse tres en ningún caso. Si, como en la situación anterior, no encuentras manera posible de reducirlo y no sabes cómo cortar una línea, déjaselo al corrector.

### **3.4** Palabras en otros idiomas:

Cuando el texto en inglés contenga palabras en otros idiomas, tendremos que entender cuál es el espíritu del uso de esa palabra, así podremos decidir si la traducimos, no la traducimos, o la quitamos.

Si el personaje que habla usa palabras en otro idioma, por ejemplo, para parecer más culto, dejaremos la palabra en ese idioma y usaremos las itálicas.

311

00:16:36,132 --> 00:16:38,330

...privándolo efectivamente

de su razón <i>d'être</i>. <-- Debe estar bien escrito en francés.

También dejaremos la palabra en otro idioma, si entendemos que el vocablo utilizado tiene aceptación entre los personajes.

90

00:08:59,105 --> 00:09:03,041

Debo revolver, debo revolver,

o el borscht se arruina. <-- Si no hay un énfasis en el uso de la palabra, no llevará itálicas.

Si el personaje habla en otro idioma, su interlocutor no lo entiende, y el espíritu del guión es que el espectador no entienda tampoco (no hay sobreimpresos de traducción en pantalla), entonces, no irán subtítulos.

### **4.1** Subtítulos Closed Caption (subtítulos para hipoacúsicos)

Van entre corchetes y en letras minúsculas, tanto descripciones de sonidos como el nombre de quién habla (siempre que no esté en pantalla) para ayudar al hipoacúsico a identificarlo.

8

00:14:35,400 --> 00:14:37,330

[Suena un celular] → **Correcto**

8

00:14:35,400 --> 00:14:37,330

- [Brendan] ¡Martha!

- ¡Ya voy! → **Correcto**

### **4.2** Las interjecciones no se eliminan

Esto porque, las interjecciones —"Clase de palabras que expresa alguna impresión súbita o un sentimiento profundo, como asombro, sorpresa, dolor, molestia, amor, etc., sirven también para apelar al interlocutor, o como fórmula de saludo, despedida, conformidad, etc.; p. ej., eh, hola"— (mal llamadas por ahí onomatopeyas —"Imitación o recreación del sonido de algo en el vocablo que se forma para significarlo", como clic o zigzag) son necesarias en muchas



ocasiones para comprender el tono (no es lo mismo "¿Sí?" que "¿Ah, sí?"). Y para los hipoacúsicos son notas esenciales.

#### Observaciones:

En el caso de un grito (Argh!), podemos poner la interjección castellana "¡ay!" o la explicación [Malcolm grita de dolor].

Los sonidos inarticulados ([i]u-huh, mm-hmm, uh?,[i] etc.) se pueden trasladar a su equivalente contextual (sí, no, ¿cómo?, etc.).

#### **Correctores**

**5.1** Tómate tu tiempo para corregir, es importante que lo que leas tenga sentido.

**5.2** Nunca olvides usar el corrector ortográfico.

**5.3** Una buena unificación de criterios dará como resultado un buen subtítulo.

**5.4** Los límites de exposición en pantalla serán de un segundo para el mínimo y de seis segundos para el máximo. (En la guía de configuración del SW te explicamos cómo detectar esto automáticamente)

*Estudios basados en la velocidad de lectura de espectadores con el inglés como lengua materna revelan que un receptor medio lee entre 150 y 180 palabras por minuto o, lo que es lo mismo, 2 ó 3 palabras por segundo. Según estas cifras, algunos expertos (Díaz Cintas, 2003: 153) recomiendan que los subtítulos de una línea, que suelen tener una media de 7 palabras (contando con que cada palabra tiene de media 5 caracteres), se mantengan 4 segundos en pantalla y los de dos líneas, que suelen contener una media de 14 palabras, se mantengan en pantalla 6 segundos. De ahí, la famosa regla de los seis segundos (d'Ydewalle, van Rensbergen y Pollet, 1987; Brondeel, 1994), «que es el tiempo que necesita un espectador medio para leer y asimilar la información de dos líneas con 35 caracteres cada una» (Lorenzo, 2001: 12).*

*Extracto de "[Evaluamos la Norma UNE 153010](#)"*

**5.5** Los créditos deben ir al final de la película en cuanto comienzan los títulos, si los pones antes, tal vez anticipes el final. La duración de los mismos será de seis segundos si la duración del video lo permite.

Tendrán el siguiente formato:

Subtítulos por aRGENTeaM

[www.aRGENTeaM.net](http://www.aRGENTeaM.net)

**5.6** El nombre del archivo finalizado deberá tener la siguiente estructura:

Para las películas:

Nombre.Compuesto.Calidad.Codec-Grupo.NºCD.srt

**The.Twelve.Labours.DVDRip.XviD-ARiSCO.CD1.srt**

Para las series:

Serie.SeasonEpisode.Nombre.Del.Episodio.Calidad.Codec-Grupo.srt

**Lost.S05E12.Dead.Is.Dead.HDTV.XviD-NoTV.srt**

**5.7** Cuando toda la línea va en itálica y en la misma figura, por ejemplo, el nombre de un programa de televisión, hay que proceder de la siguiente manera:

161

00:13:00,371 --> 00:13:03,251

<ii> Pero </ii> Masterchef <ii> empieza en 20 minutos. </ii>

9.6. Appendix 6: Code of Good Subtitling and aRGENTeaM guidelines comparison

<i>Code Recommendation</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Comment</i>
Subtitlers must always work with a copy of the production and, if possible, a dialogue list and glossary of atypical words and special references.	X		
It is the subtitler's job to spot the production and translate and write the subtitles in the (foreign) language required.	X		The reviser checks the spotting during the preparation and revision stages.
Translation quality must be high with due consideration of all idiomatic and cultural nuances.	X		Translators are invited to do research whenever they have linguistic doubts.
Simple syntactic units should be used.		X	The guideline is not explicitly clear about this aspect.
When it is necessary to condense dialogue, the text must be coherent.		X	
Subtitle text must be distributed from line to line and page to page in sense blocks and/or grammatical units.	X		
Ideally, each subtitle should be syntactically self-contained.		X	
The language register must be appropriate and correspond to locution.	X		
The language should be grammatically correct since subtitles serve as a model for literacy.	X		The complete guideline is addressed at ensuring the grammar correctness of the subtitles.
All important written information in the images (signs, notices, etc.) should be translated and incorporated wherever possible.	X		There are instructions on how to handle and format this type of information.
Given the fact that many TV viewers are hearing-impaired, "superfluous" information, such as names, off-screen interjections, etc., should also be subtitled.	X		
Songs must be subtitled where relevant.	X		Format instructions are also offered.
Obvious repetition of names and common comprehensible phrases need not always be subtitled.		X	Not included
The in and out times of subtitles must follow the speech rhythm of the dialogue, taking cuts and sound bridges into consideration.	X		
Language distribution within and over subtitles must consider cuts and sound bridges; the subtitles must underline surprise or suspense and in no way undermine it.	X		The use of dashes and ellipses is detailed and that can be considered as fulfillment of this rule.

The duration of all subtitles within a production must adhere to a regular viewer reading rhythm.	X		There are reference to translation scholars to support this argument.
Spotting must reflect the rhythm of the film.	X		
No subtitle should appear for less than one second or, with the exception of songs, stay on the screen for longer than seven seconds.	X		They use the rule that indicates that a two-line subtitles with 35 characters in every line should remain on screen for 6 seconds.
A minimum of four frames should be left between subtitles to allow the viewer's eye to register the appearance of a new subtitle.		X	There is no reference to frames between subtitles.
The number of lines in any subtitle must be limited to two.	X		
Wherever two lines of unequal length are used, the upper line should preferably be shorter to keep as much of the image as free as possible and in left-justified subtitles in order to reduce unnecessary eye movement.		X	The guideline indicates the grammar rules should be followed to decide on where to break a subtitle.
There must be a close correlation between film dialogue and subtitle content; source language and target language should be synchronized as far as possible.	X		
There must be a close correlation between film dialogue and the presence of subtitles.		X	
Each production should be edited by a reviser/editor.	X		
The (main) subtitler should be acknowledged at the end of the film or, if the credits are at the beginning, then close to the credit for the script writer.	X		The group receives the credit on the file and specific subtitlers receive the credit on the forum post.
The year of subtitle production and the copyright for the version should be displayed at the end of the film.	X		Although the year is not included, the name of the group is at the end of every subtitle