

Subtitling vs Dubbing

+ List of preferred method per country



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Translation & Localization Services

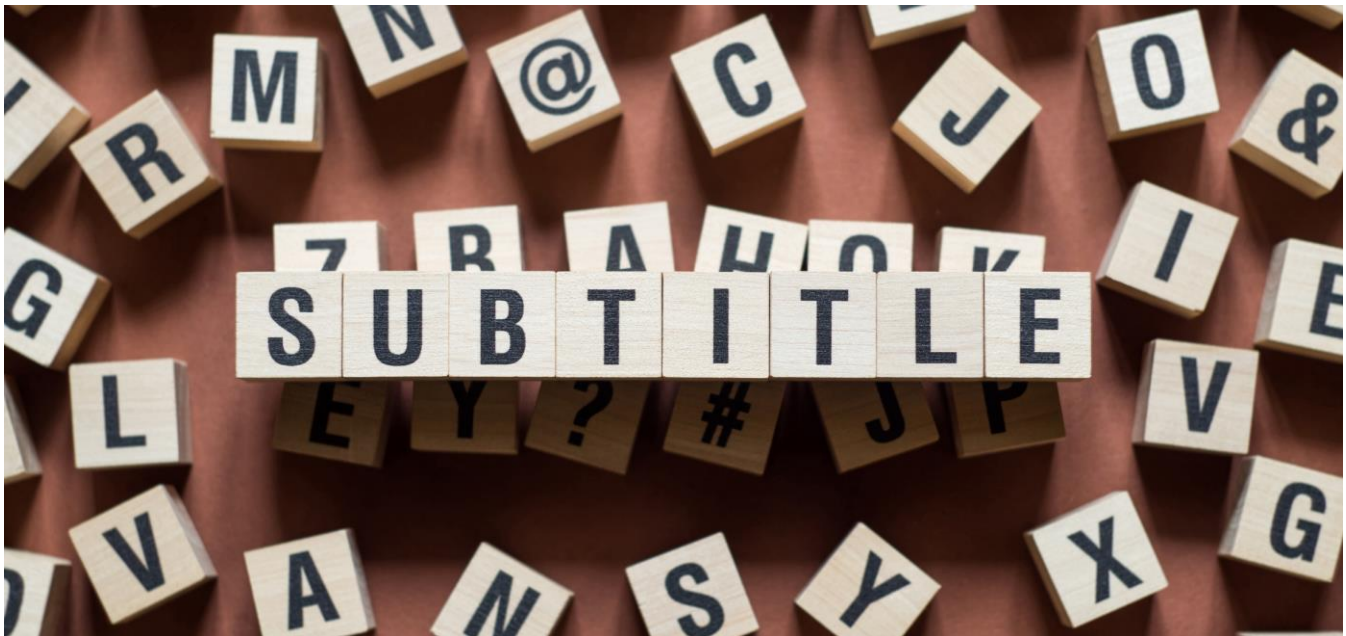
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What is Subtitling?

Adapting multimedia content for another country is a complex procedure that involves a lot more than simply translating the language. One of the most important decisions one has to make is between subtitling and video dubbing.

Subtitling is the process of providing a film, video or program with subtitles. Subtitles are derived from either a transcript or screenplay of the dialog or commentary in films, television programs or video games and are usually displayed at the bottom of the screen.

They can either be a form of written translation of a dialog in a foreign language, or a written rendering of the dialog in the same language, with or without added information to help viewers who are deaf and hard of hearing to follow the dialog, or people who cannot understand the spoken dialogue or who have accent recognition problems.



What is Dubbing?



Dubbing, in filmmaking and video production, is a post-production process in which additional or supplementary recordings are lip-synced and with original production sound to create the finished soundtrack.

Dubbing is most familiar to audiences as a means of translating foreign-language films into the audience's language. When a foreign language is dubbed, the translation of the original dialogue is carefully matched to the lip movements of the actors in the film.

Advantages and disadvantages of subtitling

Subtitling lets you listen to the original actors' voices and allows for an extremely accurate translation. It renders the show accessible to viewers who are deaf and hard of hearing, people who cannot understand the spoken dialogue or who have accent recognition problems.

Listening to the original language can also help you improve your language skills. By watching and listening to videos in English, foreigners are more likely to improve their ear for the language, their grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary. In addition, it's a lot less expensive.

Nevertheless, subtitles may distract you from the film action and some of the feeling may be lost when read in the written form.

Advantages and disadvantages of video dubbing

On the other hand, dubbing a program means that the audience doesn't have to read the text while watching the video. For many viewers, hearing the dialogue in their native language lets them focus on the action and immerse themselves in the media.

But, video dubbing is a costly, time-consuming and difficult process. It evolves a lot more than just rendering the words into another language. Most of the time, editors try to synchronize what is being said to match the lip movements of the character. To do so, they often have to change the translation or the word order in the target language for a better fit.

Why certain countries prefer one method than the other?

There has been a lot of debate why some countries prefer to watch dubbed films rather than original films with subtitles. Some say that people with an interest in foreign cultures prefer subtitles, while dubbing is the pick for those with nationalist interests.

Another opinion is that the preference for dubbing or subtitles is indicative of the wealth of the country where the film is being shown, as dubbing is more frequently used in rich countries.

So, what should you consider when adapting multimedia content for another country?

The genre and the purpose of the video. Is the video informative? Does it seek to entertain? For example, a documentary or corporate video might benefit more from the preciseness of subtitles, but many artistic productions would not welcome their use on screen.

The target country. Most countries have a preferred method of language adaptation. In Spain for example, almost all foreign-language material is dubbed and this method is preferred over subtitling in most contexts. On the other hand, Greece has traditionally used subtitles in most multimedia content and the audience is accustomed to reading the subtitles while watching videos.

The budget. This can be the most important factor when deciding the preferred method. The cost for subtitling can be up to 15 times less than video dubbing, so no matter what the other pros and cons are, this is an aspect that cannot be ignored.

The deadline. Dubbing multimedia content takes a lot more time than subtitling, since it requires more processes and more people involved.

List of method used per country

Country	Subtitling	Dubbing	Dubbing only for children	Voice-over
Europe				
Albania	x		x	
Austria		x		
Belgium				
• French		x		
• Dutch		x		
• German		x		
• Flemish	x		x	
Bulgaria	x		x	x
Croatia	x		x	
Czech Republic		x		
Estonia	x		x	
France		x		
Georgia				x
Germany		x		
Greece	x		x	
Hungary		x		
Ireland	x		x	
Italy		x		
Latvia				x
Lithuania			x	x
Montenegro	x		x	
Netherlands	x		x	
Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden)	x		x	

List of method used per country

Country	Subtitling	Dubbing	Dubbing only for children	Voice-over
Poland	x		x	x
Portugal	x		x	
Romania	x		x	
Russia				x
Serbia	x		x	
Slovakia		x		
Slovenia	x		x	
Spain		x		
Switzerland		x		
Turkey	x		x	
Ukraine				x
United Kingdom	x		x	
America				
United States and English-speaking Canada	x			
French-speaking Canada		x		
Spanish-speaking countries (except Mexico)		x		
Brazil		x		
Mexico	x		x	
Asia				
China		x		
Hong Kong	x (English and Mandarin)	x (all other languages)		
India		x		

List of method used per country

Country	Subtitling	Dubbing	Dubbing only for children	Voice-over
Indonesia	x		x	
Japan	x		x	
Malaysia	x		x	
Mongolia	x			x
Pakistan		x		
Philippines		x		
Singapore	x			
South Korea		x		
Taiwan	x		x	
Thailand		x		
Vietnam	x		x	

Commit Global has been helping corporations around the world translate their products, services & brands in local languages making them culturally relevant for more than 20 years.

At Commit Global, we see the biggest value in collaboration, and we strive to cultivate such a relationship with our customers. Our communication is to the point. Our action is prompt and transparent. Our delivery is consistently reliable and high-standard.

With our ISO 9001, 17100, 27001 and 13485-certified processes, we apply strict QA procedures in all projects.

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