Accessible Filmmaking:
Integrating Translation into Film Production

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Universidade de Vigo
Contents

1. Divorce, damage and reconciliation

2. The three shifts of media accessibility
   - Universal
   - User-centered
   - Proactive

3- Final thoughts
The Divorce

Film(making) .......................... AVT / Media access

Pre-production
Production
Post-production

Distribution
The Divorce

It used to be different...

• 1900-1920s – Silent cinema: intertitles > at post-prod

• Late 1930s onwards: refinement of dubbing/subbing > distrib.
The Divorce

Top-Grossing Films 2000-2017
+ Best Picture Oscar Winners 2000-2017

---------------------------------------------

Average foreign gross (subtitled or dubbed) = 50%  

However

Between 0.01%-0.1% of the budget and 50% of the revenue
The Damage

- Market conditions: deadlines and remuneration
'Roma', una película en español subtitulada en español

Polémica por los rótulos del filme de Cuarón que convierten "enojarse" en "enfadarse" y cambian el "ustedes" por "vosotros"
Mamá to Madre? ‘Roma’ Subtitles in Spain Anger Alfonso Cuarón

By Alex Marshall

Jan. 11, 2019
'Ignorant and offensive!' The subtext of subtitles

© 11 January 2019

A decision to subtitle Alfonso Cuaron’s Spanish-language film, Roma, for Spanish audiences has left the Oscar-winning director fuming.

It was, he told Spain’s El Pais newspaper, “parochial, ignorant and offensive”.
Yet too many film-makers look on subtitling as an afterthought, an attitude the AVTE is seeking to correct. As Buchanan points out, “Subtitles are the conduit allowing you to communicate your film’s ideas around the globe. Bad subtitles can ruin millions of dollars’ worth of hard work. A film-maker wouldn’t outsource their colour correction or audio mix and just think: ‘I’ll leave them to it, I’m sure it’ll be fine.’ They would want to see it, hear it, get a second opinion, make sure everybody is on the same page. It should be the same with subtitles.”
The Reconciliation: AFM

The consideration of translation and accessibility during the production of audiovisual media

(through the collaboration between the creative team and the translator)

in order to provide access to content for people that cannot, or cannot properly, access it in its original form.
The Reconciliation

Filmmaker

Accessible Filmmaking

Translator

Viewers
Contents

1. Divorce, damage and reconciliation
2. The three shifts of media accessibility
Changes in media access: the three shifts

For all (universal)
With all (user-centred)
From inception (proactive)

(Greco, 2018)
Changes in media access: the three shifts

For all (universal)

With all (user-centred)

From inception (proactive)

(Greco, 2018)
Information technology — User interface component accessibility —

Part 23:
Guidance on the visual presentation of audio information (including captions and subtitles)

Technologies de l’information — Accessibilité du composant interface utilisateur —
Partie 23: Titre manque

ICS: 35.240.20
-For those who **cannot hear or understand** the audio content

-Persons
with hearing loss
with learning difficulties or cognitive disabilities
**watching a movie in a non-native language**
who cannot hear the audio content due to environmental conditions
But are filmmakers making films for all?
Hitchcock Truffaut

The definitive study of Alfred Hitchcock by François Truffaut
Revised Edition
Denial of difference
Denial of difference

“I am interested in the audience.
They are going to sit there and say:
I know what’s coming next.
I have to say: *Do you?*”
Denial of difference

“I am interested in the audience”.
Denial of difference

“I am interested in the audience”.

Are you?
Denial of difference

I am interested in the original audience.
Filmmaker

Translator

Viewers

The global film (for all)
Changes in media access: the three shifts

For all (universal)

With all (user-centred)
Filmmaker

Translator

Viewers

The global film

Reception research
(with all)
Reception research: subtitling
Subtitling

The impact of subtitles on the nature of the film & on its reception by the viewers
Subtitling

The impact of subtitles on the nature of the film
Subtitling

Constraints (time and space)

Songs

Subtitlese and language variation

Multilingualism
Subtitling

The impact of subtitles on the nature of the film & on its reception by the viewers
Subtitling

The impact of subtitles

on its reception by the viewers
How do we watch original films?

How do we watch subtitled films?
How do we watch original films?

Voluntary eye movements

Involuntary eye movements
How do we watch original films?

Voluntary eye movements: the tasks we take on

Involuntary eye movements
How do we watch original films?

Voluntary eye movements: the tasks we take on

Involuntary eye movements: illusion of volition
How do we watch original films?

Voluntary eye movements: the tasks we take on

Involuntary eye movements: illusion of volition

- inattentional blindness
- attentional synchrony
- visual momentum
How do we watch subtitled films?

General (un)tidy pattern

Visual momentum

Subtitling legibility

Subtitling blindness
How do we watch subtitled films?

General (un)tidy pattern

Visual momentum

Subtitling legibility

Subtitling blindness
How do we watch subtitled films?

General (un)tidy pattern
How do we watch subtitled films?

General (un)tidy pattern
How do we watch subtitled films?

- General (un)tidy pattern
- Visual momentum
- Subtitling legibility
- Subtitling blindness
How do we watch subtitled films?

General (un)tidy pattern

Visual momentum

Subtitling legibility

Subtitling blindness
Entendemos que costaría
un poco más solo para nosotros dos.
Entendemos

que costaría un poco más,

solo para nosotros dos.
How do we watch subtitled films?

General (un)tidy pattern

Visual momentum

Subtitling legibility

Subtitling blindness
How do we watch subtitled films?

General (un)tidy pattern

Visual momentum

Subtitling legibility

Subtitling blindness
Subtitling blindness

1) Shots with dialogue/narration over on-screen text

A lovely lady and a grumpy old man live here.
Subtitling blindness

1) Shots with dialogue/narration over on-screen text

AQUÍ VIVEN UNA ADORABLE ANCIANA
Y UN VIEJO GRUÑÓN.

A lovely lady and a
grumpy old man live here/

Ella sabe lo que tiene ahí.
Yo no estoy muy seguro.
Subtitling blindness

1) Shots with dialogue/narration over on-screen text

The phone was always ringing at the RNIB.
Subtitling blindness

2) An important visual element opening a scene with dialogue
Subtitling blindness

2) An important visual element opening a scene with dialogue
Subtitling blindness

3) Peripheral visual elements in scenes with dialogue
Subtitling blindness

3) Peripheral visual elements in scenes with dialogue

Audiodescription for theatre has to be delivered live.
Subtitling blindness

4) Visual elements in scenes with fast dialogue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Viewing speed</th>
<th>Time on subtitles</th>
<th>Time on images</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 cps ≈ 120wpm</td>
<td>±40%</td>
<td>±60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.5cps ≈ 150wpm</td>
<td>±50%</td>
<td>±50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15cps ≈ 180wpm</td>
<td>±60% - 70%</td>
<td>±40% - 30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.7cps ≈ 200wpm</td>
<td>±80%</td>
<td>±20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TASTY.
I got sidetracked last night.
Had 2 party with some new homies
Tonight

If inconvenient, come anyway.
SH
Subtitling blindness

4) Shots where the subtitle covers important visual elements
Subtitling blindness

4) Shots where the subtitle covers important visual elements
4) Shots where the subtitle covers important visual elements
Subtitling blindness

4) Shots where the subtitle covers important visual elements
Subtitling blindness

5) Quick shots with dialogue or narration
Subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing

Character identification

Manner of speaking

Music

Sound effects
Subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing

Character identification

Sound effects
Subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing

Character identification

When a speaker ID is required for a character who has yet to be identified by name, use [man] or [woman], or [male voice] or [female voice], so as not to provide information that is not yet present in the narrative.

Sound effects
TREVOR: What I can imagine
is as if I put my head in a bowl of porridge.
There’s nothing.
[Man] What I can imagine
Subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing

Character identification

Sound effects
Subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing

Character identification

Sound effects

Use objective descriptions that describe genre or mood identifiers for atmospheric non-lyrical music, for example [menacing electronic music plays].
[vivacious, sparkling melody continues]
[frenzied, anguished music swells]

[anguished music subsides]
[LOIS GRUNTING]

[CLARK GRUNTS]
Limitations of subtitles

Cannot show difference in volumes
Cannot show depth
Cannot show overlapping dialogue / sounds
Limitations of subtitles

Cannot show difference in volumes
Cannot show depth
Cannot show overlapping dialogue / sounds

Film = show, don’t tell

Creative Subtitles
Creative / Integrated Titles

Font
Size
Placement
Display mode
Effects
# Font Personalities: Body Fonts

The fonts you use for body copy should be easy to read at 14 pt or smaller, but that doesn’t mean they can’t have personality! Use the categories below to find the perfect body font for your next infographic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Playful</th>
<th>Professional</th>
<th>Modern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quicksand</td>
<td>Arimo</td>
<td>Montserrat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arvo</td>
<td>Times New Roman</td>
<td>Open Sans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dosis</td>
<td>Verdana</td>
<td>Lato</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cabin</td>
<td>EB Garamond</td>
<td>Nunito</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varela Round</td>
<td>Arial</td>
<td>Roboto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trebuchet MS</td>
<td>Merriweather</td>
<td>Roboto Condensed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oxygen</td>
<td></td>
<td>Source Sans Pro</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asap</td>
<td></td>
<td>News Cycle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sophisticated</th>
<th>Classical</th>
<th>Delicate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simonetta</td>
<td>Expletus Sans</td>
<td>Dosis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alegreya</td>
<td>Averia Serif Libre</td>
<td>Simonetetta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lora</td>
<td>Overlock</td>
<td>Alegreya</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raleway</td>
<td>Philosopher</td>
<td>News Cycle</td>
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<tr>
<td>EB Garamond</td>
<td></td>
<td>Archivo Narrow</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimal</th>
<th>Dramatic</th>
<th>Futuristic</th>
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<tr>
<td>Open Sans</td>
<td>Roboto Condensed</td>
<td>Abel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source Sans Pro</td>
<td></td>
<td>Quicksand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roboto</td>
<td>Archivo Narrow</td>
<td>News Cycle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|             |                      |               |
|             |                      |               |

- Venngage
DIRTY WARS
L. COL. ANTHONY SHAFFER [RET]
DIA - LEADERSHIP TARGETING CELL
I didn't eat for three days and nights.
so I knew it was illegal but of course that’s what got me a bit excited!
Sydney, Australia
June 1973
Ryan Sarafolean
Director of KGSA Foundation

We didn't know where we would go from there.

RYAN SARAFOLEAN
Director of KGSA Foundation

We didn't know where we would go from there.

Ryan Sarafolean
Director of KGSA Foundation

We didn't know where we would go from there.

RYAN SARAFOLEAN
Director of KGSA Foundation

We didn't know where we would go from there.
RYAN SARAFOLEAN
Director of KGSA Foundation

We didn’t know where we would go from there
This is cassette one, track one.
He sadly wandered off into the mountains.
Placement of creative subtitles

- Short distance between the title and the main focus area
- No coverage of primary areas
- Indication of speaker and speaking direction
- Legibility: contrast with the background
- Aesthetic identity: tone, atmosphere and image composition
- Accessibility: character identification and info about sound or mood
Ich bin Becky, ich arbeite hier.
And will you be coming as yourself?
And will you be coming as yourself?
Changes in media access: the three shifts

For all (universal)

With all (user-centred)

From inception (proactive)
Innovation for Media Accessibility

The Galician Observatory for Media Accessibility is a group of researchers and practitioners who share the aim of breaking down sensory and linguistic barriers in audiovisual media.

We believe that integrating accessibility measures early on in a production gives media-makers more control and results in products that can be enjoyed by more diverse audiences.
Accessible Filmmaking
Integrating translation and accessibility into the filmmaking process
PABLO ROMERO-FRESCO
Is it feasible?

Too time consuming

Too expensive

Filmmakers not interested
AFM workflow

**STEPS FOR PRE-PRODUCTION STAGE**

01  **(MULTILINGUAL FILMS)**
Translation in the scriptwriting process

02  **(CO-PRODUCTIONS)**
Translation of script for funding

03  **(ALWAYS)**
Provision of pre-production material to the PAT

04  **(IDEALLY)**
Initial meeting with the director and production of a translation/accessibility proposal

05  **(IDEALLY)**
Recruitment of media accessibility professionals, translators and, if need be, sensory-impaired consultants
AFM workflow

**STEPS FOR PRODUCTION**

06 **(MULTILINGUAL SHOOTS)**  
On-set translation and interpreting

07 **(ALWAYS)**  
(On-set) discussions with the filmmaker about mise-en-scène and cinematography

08 **(DOCUMENTARIES)**  
Transcription of footage for editing using respeaking (speech recognition-based subtitles)
### STEPS FOR POST-PRODUCTION PRIOR TO DISTRIBUTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>09</strong></td>
<td>(ALWAYS, IF NOT PROVIDED IN PRE-PRODUCTION) Provision of film, script and further docs to either the PAT or the:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|  | - dubbing translator  
|  | - subtitler  
|  | - audio describer |
| **10** | (IDEALLY) Preparation of: |  
|  | - dubbing script  
|  | - subtitles  
|  | - audio description |
| **11** | (ALWAYS) Meeting between the filmmaker/creative team and the PAT or the: |  
|  | - dubbing translator  
|  | - subtitler  
|  | - audio describer |
| **12** | (ONLY IF DEEMED NECESSARY AND IF THERE IS ACCESS IN POST-PRODUCTION) Amendments to the editing of the film |
| **13** | (ALWAYS) Preparation (and recording) of accessible versions of: |  
|  | - dubbing script  
|  | - subtitles  
|  | - audio description |
| **14** | (ALWAYS) Meeting between the filmmaker/creative team and the PAT or the: |  
|  | - dubbing translator  
|  | - subtitler  
|  | - audio describer |
| **15** | (IDEALLY) Amendments to: |  
|  | - the dubbed track  
|  | - the subtitles  
|  | - the audio description |
| **16** | (IDEALLY) Feedback from the director |
| **17** | (ALWAYS) Final versions of: |  
|  | - dubbing  
|  | - subtitles  
|  | - audio description  
|  | Preparation of translation and accessibility guide for the film |
AFM cost
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Package</th>
<th>Costs</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>STANDARD PACKAGE (APPROX COSTS)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AD</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>AUDIO DESCRIPTION - £2,300</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Script: £700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Recording: £500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Studio Hire: £400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sound Editor: £500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Meetings/Amendments: £200</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SDH</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>£1,100</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Origination: £650</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Proofreading: £250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Meetings/Amendments: £200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DAT</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>DIRECTOR OF ACCESSIBILITY: £1,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(During post-production only, 8 days)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Recruitment, coordination, meetings, quality control, AD recording, subtitling guide</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>£5,000 (MIN)</td>
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<td><strong>ADDITIONAL EXTRAS (APPROX COSTS)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>AI</strong></td>
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<td>AUDIO INTRODUCTION: £300</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Script: £100</td>
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<td>Studio: £100</td>
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<td><strong>C/IS</strong></td>
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<td>CREATIVE/INTEGRATED SUBTITLES: £4,100</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Implementation: £3,600</td>
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<td><strong>DAT</strong></td>
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<td>DIRECTOR OF ACCESSIBILITY</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(During pre-production, based on 3 days): £600</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Recruitment, budget, meeting, proposal</td>
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<td><strong>SIC</strong></td>
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<td>SENSORY-IMPAIRED CONSULTANCY</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>SDH - £250 per day</td>
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<td>AD - £250 per day</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ELT</strong></td>
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<td>ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEMPLATE</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(To be used by interlingual subtitlers): £500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>£11,000 (MIN)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL (BASIC + EXTRAS): £11,000 (MIN)**
Accessible filmmakers

Matt Ross: I loved this back-and-forth, as it was fascinating, but also because it allowed me to really discuss, in detail, what I hoped to communicate and know that my intentions would be preserved.

In truth, the subtitler has the power to illuminate or obfuscate the spoken language. And so I was extremely fortunate to get Anaïs, someone who understood, on a deep level, the film and its intentions.

Anaïs Duchet: Having the writer carefully proofread the subtitles and knowing his original intentions made me reconsider subtitles which I might not otherwise have returned to over and over, about which I had maybe “capitulated” a bit too fast in the face of the technical constraints.

Matt Ross, were you in contact with translators of the films into languages other than French?

Personally overseeing every translation would be impossible, of course. But the choice of words matters and when I’m not part of the conversation, I’m really just sort of hoping that the individual translators understood my intentions. I can only imagine that the conversations I had with Anaïs could very well have been had in every language. Without them, something invaluable is lost in translation.
Cuarón was also heavily involved in the English-language subtitling of Roma, a job he considered painful. First, he started with a literal translation of the dialogue, but that didn’t work because of its duration in relation to what takes place on screen.

“The issue with subtitling is that it’s not only about translating, but also about creating a rhythm,” he noted. His priority was keeping the audience engaged with what was happening on screen:

“If you have a viewer that’s too worried about reading the subtitles they are going to stop reading the image.”
Cuarón was also heavily involved in the English-language subtitling of Roma, a job he considered painful. First, he started with a literal translation of the dialogue, but that didn’t work because of its duration in relation to what takes place on screen.

“The issue with subtitling is that it’s not only about translating, but also about creating a rhythm,” he noted. His priority was keeping the audience engaged with what was happening on screen:

“If you have a viewer that’s too worried about reading the subtitles they are going to stop reading the image.”
"AFM is an extremely creative and collaborative process. For us, the attention and thought given by the accessibility team meant that the process transcended basic considerations of clarity, comprehension, plot and was able to encompass aesthetic concerns, such as viewpoint, ambiguity, tension, tone, etc.

Working in this way allowed the accessible versions to be an extension of the wider creative approach of the film."
“More than any discussion about the film, working on AD and SDH has enabled me to see the film not as I made it, but, for the first time, as it’s going to be experienced by the viewers”.

(Marcelo Toledo)
Creative dubbing supervisors

Aim: - to preserve the original creative intent of our filmmakers throughout the many language adaptations

Requirements: - to identify challenges that localization will face even before it begins
- to work with content creators to balance needs of the target audience with nuances of creative vision
- to develop creative approaches to localisation when suitable
Some final thoughts

Real access needs collaboration before distribution

Not new, but long overdue

More creative control for filmmakers

Better working conditions for access providers

Improved quality for the users

Financial and common sense
Online AFM training course
Filmmaker

Translator

Viewers

The global film (for all)
Filmmaker

Translator

All viewers

The global film (for all)
Filmmaker

Translator

Director of Accessibility & Translation

(from inception)

Reception research
(with all)

The global film
(for all)

All viewers

All viewers
Accessible Filmmaking

Filmmaker

Translator

Director of Accessibility & Translation

(for all)

The global film

All viewers

Reception research

(with all)
Accessible Filmmaking
Films for all
Accessible Filmmaking:
Integrating Translation into Film Production

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