

Using Eye Tracking to Study the Effect of Badly Synchronized Subtitles on the Gaze Paths of Television Viewers

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ABSTRACT

The present study had two aims: 1) to examine how breaking the synchronization of subtitles and spoken dialogue affects the attention allocation of television viewers, and 2) to assess the usability of eye-tracking methodology in studying subtitling conventions. This was achieved by analyzing the eye-tracking data of two groups of subjects who watched different versions of a subtitled television programme: in one version the subtitles were composed according to the subtitling rules used by Yle, the Finnish national public service broadcasting company, while in the other version the subtitles included thirty-one cases in which the rules were broken in various ways. The gaze data confirmed the hypothesis that disrupting the synchronization draws the gaze more to the subtitles, but the questionnaire analysis suggested that the subjects were not conscious of this effect and failed to notice most of the manipulations. Nevertheless, eye-tracking methodology has much to offer to the research of audio-visual translation.

KEYWORDS: eye movements, fixations, reception, subtitles.