



University of Antwerp
| TRICS | Translation, Interpreting
and Intercultural Studies

PIVOT TEMPLATES IN AUDIO DESCRIPTION PERFORMANCE AND ATTITUDE OF TRANSLATORS

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AUDIO DESCRIPTION TRANSLATION

- Increased availability of audio described content
- Reduced costs and time required to produce scripts
- Maintaining quality
- Avoiding cultural loss
- Using pivot templates

(Herrador Molina, 2006; López Vera, 2006; Matamala, 2006); Orero, 2007; Remael & Vercauteren, 2010; Jankowska, 2015; Jankowska, Milc, & Fryer, 2017; Oncins, 2022)

Describers are trained in describing the image
many are not trained in intercultural
competence. [...] As a result, describers are faced
with tasks they are not fit to perform
such as creating audio description to films
embedded in a culture distant to theirs.

(Jankowska, Milc, & Fryer, 2017)



Ibiza, Netflix, 2018



We can throw out virtually everything that sounds Spanish. So that *paella* becomes a dish of rice[...]. But it's those Spanish interjections give that flavor that the viewer is watching something taking place in Spain.

Subtitling templates are files which include spotting, transcription of the dialogues, offscreen text and annotations.

(Kapsaskis, 2011; Georgakopoulou, 2019; Oziemblewska & Szarkowska, 2022)

SETUP

SCRIPTING EXPERIMENT

■ CLIPS

- 5 clips (ca. 1 minute), films set in Spain or Spanish.
- Clips were manipulated to include as many cultural references as possible.

■ ENGLISH PIVOT TEMPLATES

- AD-scripts written in Spanish by 5 Spanish describers.
- Culture references: foreign cultural-words & culture-free generic terms.



FOREIGN CULTURAL WORDS (FCW)

The two girls photograph the imposing towers of the Sagrada Família.



CULTURE-FREE GENERIC TERMS (CFGT)

Later, on the Rambla, Vicky talks on the phone, next to a bird stand.

(Newmark, 1988; Mangiron, 2006)

SCRIPTING EXPERIMENT

- **CLIPS**

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- **ENGLISH PIVOT TEMPLATES**

- AD-scripts written in Spanish by 5 Spanish describers.
- Culture references: foreign cultural-words & culture-free generic terms.
- Template in English with spotting and annotations (ca. 700-100 characters).



00:00:07.15 ⏪ ⏩

"Tortilla" or "tortilla de patatas" is a traditional dish from Spain with eggs and potatoes, optionally including onion.

Another day, Sofia picks up a plate of sea urchins. She flips them.

normal ↕ en-AU - Wavenet-B (M)

00:00:14.02

"Paella" is a traditional Spanish rice dish.

Radiant Sofia and her friends pose in front of a paella. She playfully bites her finger. Sofia's mother takes a picture. Sofia who smiles back.

00:00:24.00

In the evening, Toni with his father at Sofia's restaurant. They are blissfully. Another day. A boy carries a flambéed lobster. He hides behind souvenir stalls. Frank takes a piece and relishes it.

00:00:41.23

Zarzuela de marisco is a seafood stew.

At night, Sophia comes out of the kitchen, smiling. She looks for a hand signal. Waiters emerge from the kitchen with steaming paella. They applaud. Sofia watches anxiously. At the table, her father orders zarzuela de marisco. The rest of the diners do the same. They close their eyes.

00:00:07.15



00:01:03.04



SCRIPTING EXPERIMENT

- **PARTICIPANTS**

- 5 subtitlers, 1 describer.
- English > Polish, no knowledge of Spanish or Spanish culture.

- **METHODS**

- Online session, screen recording, post-task interview, scripts.

- **ANALYSIS**

- Thematic analysis, qualitative analysis, text analysis.

RESULTS

Overall
feasibility



Template
features



Advantages



Software
features



Challenges

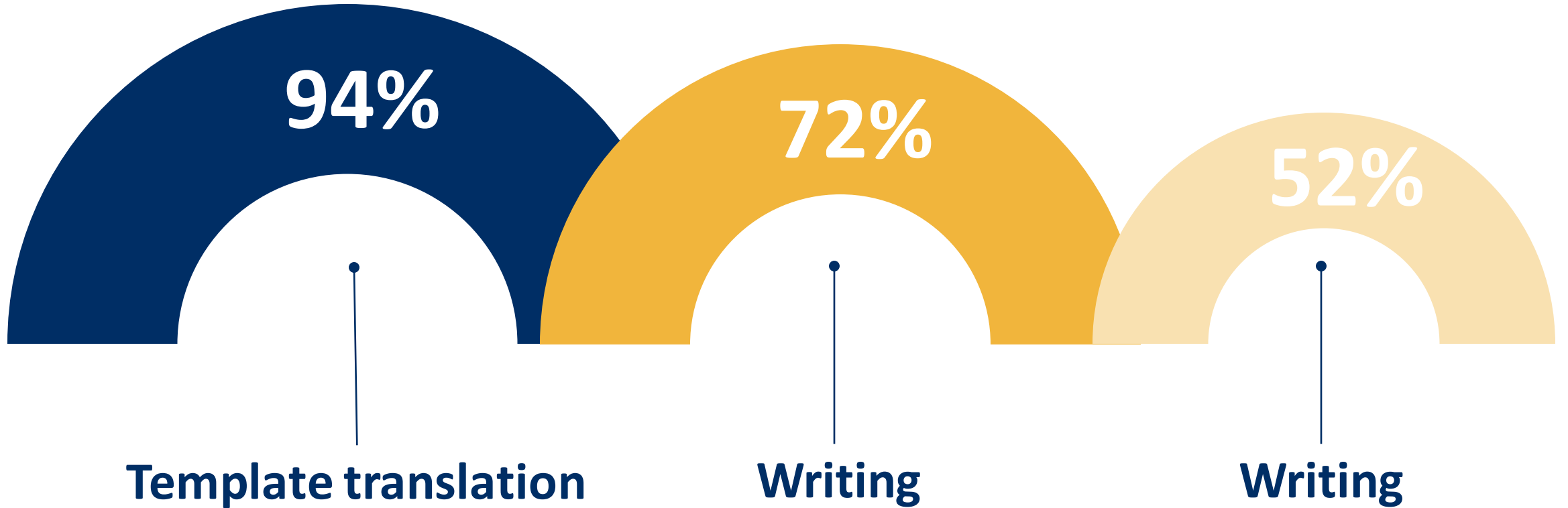


**Cultural
references**

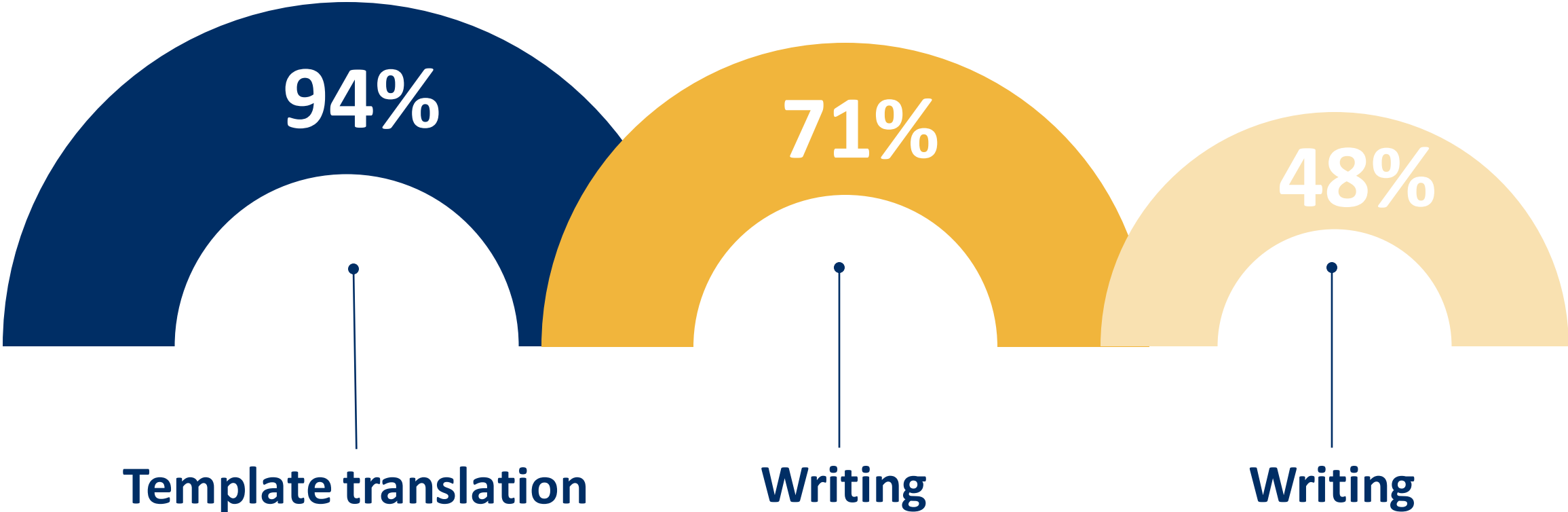


TRANSFER OF CULTURAL REFERENCES

FOREIGN CULTURAL WORDS



CULTURE-FREE GENERIC TERMS





I here was still quite a bit of space left, so I could add that there was a Gaudi building in the background, a building in his style. I don't know which building it is exactly, so I couldn't name it, but I described it as having soaring towers.



Some people know that it is, well, some kind of a famous park in Barcelona. They don't quite know why it's famous and what's there. That's why here I was very happy that there is some space to add something.



Because Park Güell itself, I don't know if... if the name doesn't tell me anything... What is this park? I also think that it is easier for the viewer to imagine...

STRATEGIES & MOTIVATION

AD Template	AD Translation	Tactic
Radiant Sofia and her friends pose in front of a paella .	Radosna Sofia z przyjaciółmi pozują z paellą . English back translation: Joyful Sofia and her friends pose with a paella .	Retention
A group of costaleros stands outside a church.	Przed kościołem stoi grupa uczestników procesji, costaleros . English back translation: In front of the church stands a group of procession participants, costaleros .	Specification
Cristina, camera in hand, walks down a narrow street in the Barrio Gótico .	Cristina z aparatem w dzielnicy gotyckiej . English back translation: Cristina with her camera in the Gothic Quarter .	Direct translation
Capataz in a suit gives a sign and the costaleros lift the paso	Na sygnał lidera uroczystości costaleros unoszą podest. English back translation: At the signal of the leader of the ceremony , the costaleros raise the platform.	Generalization
A busy bar. A waiter serves a pincho of boquerones.	W barze kelner podaje tapas z sardeli . English back translation: At the bar, a waiter serves anchovy tapas .	Substitution
Vicky and Judy walk down the stairs of the MNAC and stop at a terrace overlooking the Plaza de Espanya .	Narodowe Muzeum Sztuki Katalonii . Vicky i Judy schodzą w kierunku tarasu z widokiem na Plac Hiszpański . English back translation: National Art Museum of Catalonia . Vicky and Judy walk down towards the terrace overlooking Spanish Square .	Official equivalent
[...] people dip them in romesco sauce and eat them. They drink wine from a porrón .	Goście maczają cebule w sosie romesco, jedzą ze smakiem i popijają winem. English back translation: Guests dip onions in romesco sauce, eat with relish and sip wine.	Omission



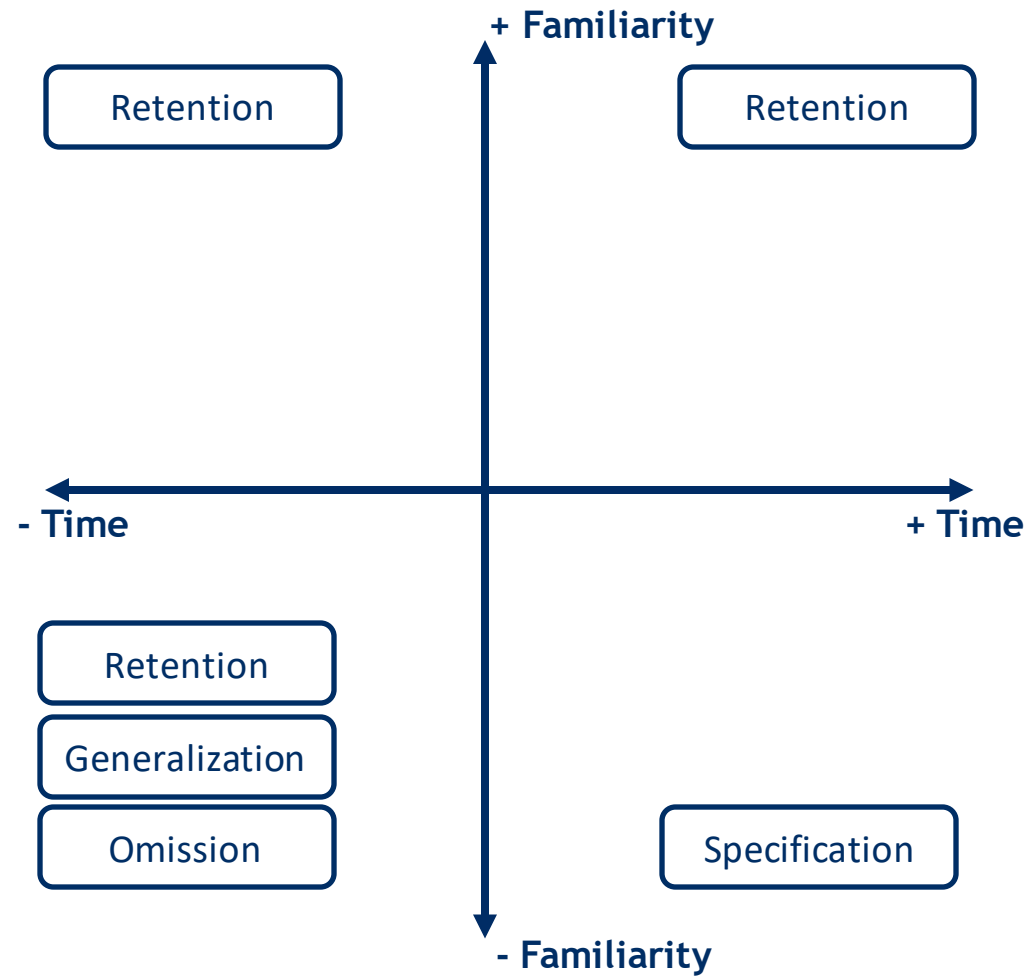
I tried to run it through my filter, that is, to consider how representative my filter is.



The way I approached it was that where I thought something needed to be added, I added, I described. Where something was some recognizable cultural object, I didn't add anything.



I was guided by some sense of what might be familiar to the viewer. I have a teenage child [...] and this teenage girl is often in my mind such a, let's say, average viewer, unfamiliar with the subject. So, I imagine what she may or may not know. Well, that's more or less the criterion I adopted as to what I can include and not explain at all. I often use this in translations directed to a general audience, that I imagine her and her friends. This is for me some kind of a mental representation of an average viewer, an ordinary person, interested perhaps in the world in general but with who does not have a deep knowledge of various subjects.

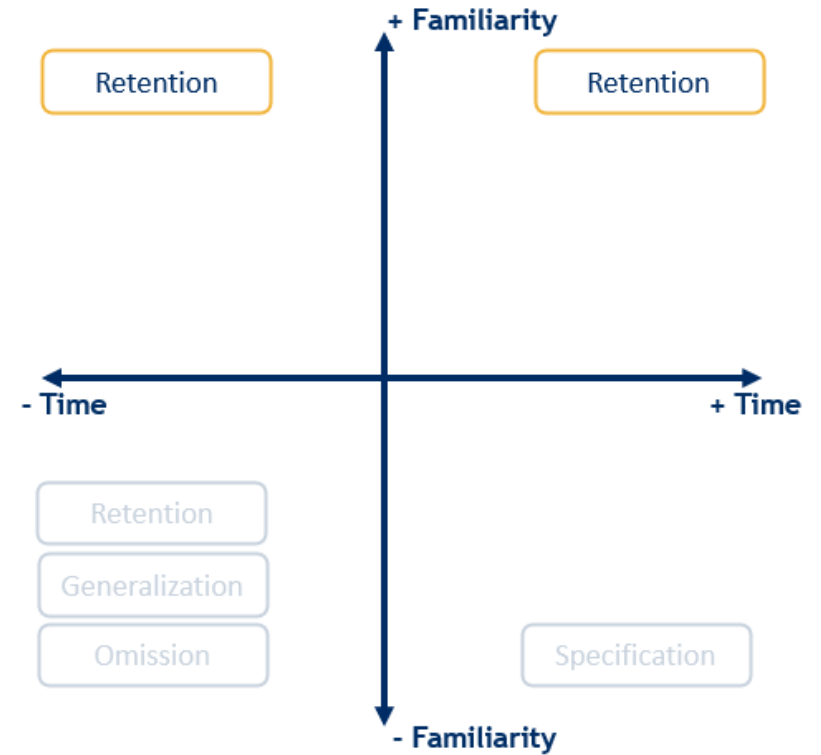




I have always tried to add more information. I didn't want to leave things vague, except for such obvious things as Catalonia or tortilla. That, in my opinion, doesn't need any additional explanation, and when a person hears the words, they will immediately have the right image.



I suspected that most people who are not somehow super-read in arts are not familiar with this sculpture. This is why I really wanted to describe it, but there was no space. I gave the name, someone who is interested, will be able search for themselves, and find a description.

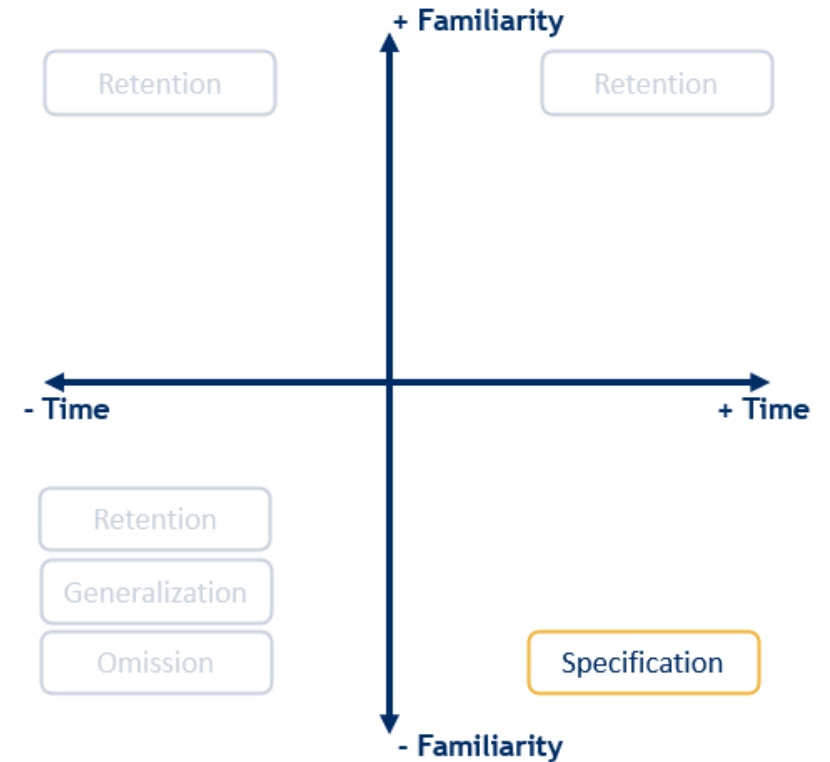




Regarding some of the cultural references, I explained them. I left the original name at least in the first, but mainly in the first occurrence.

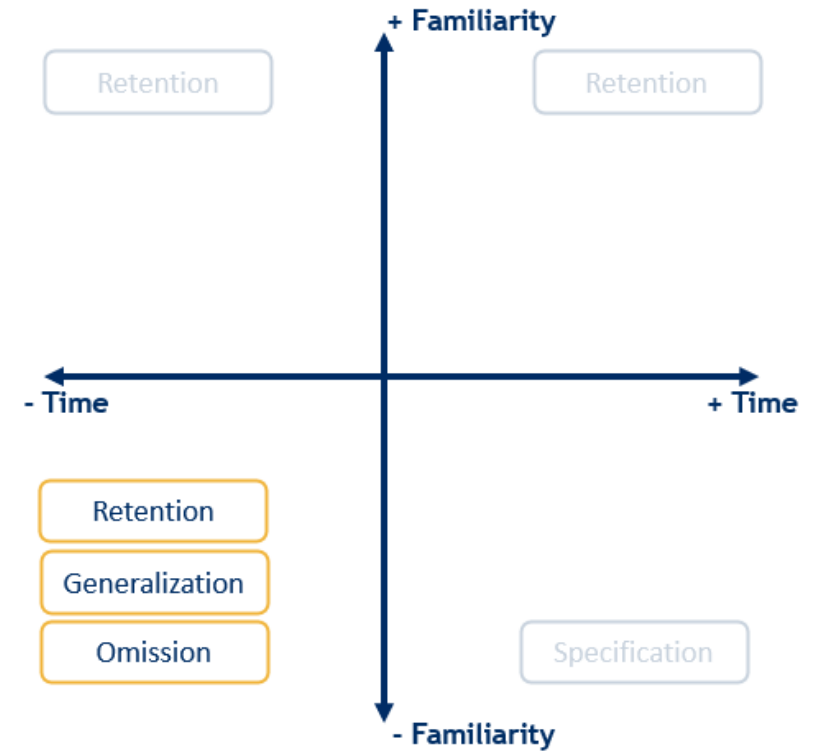


I wrote "They enter under a *paso*, a kind of litter." If it wouldn't fit, I would leave the word *paso* out. But since there was space and there was an opportunity to explain to the viewer what this *paso* was... Well, that's cool, because **we enriched the description**. And later in the film I was able to use the word *paso*, because I had already introduced it.





Participants compared generalization to "**handling on a silver platter**" (PL03) which, in their opinion, helps the audience to get a better idea of "**what is happening on the screen**" (PL01) and "**assures a smooth experience**" and does not "**take them out of rhythm**" (PL01). Interestingly, while participants were quite strongly convinced about the advantages of generalization, they were also aware that it makes the description "**shallower**" and more "**diluted**" (PL04).



CONCLUSIONS & SO WHAT

- AD-translation (and writing) require intercultural competence and a careful judgement of the target audience.
- Pivot templates can contribute to preventing cultural loss in audio description.
 - Translated scripts were less generic than written scripts.
 - Translated scripts contained less errors than written scripts.
- Participants were very aware of the importance of cultural references and the need to find a balance between domestication and foreignization.
 - Translators consciously used strategies and tactics known from subtitling.
 - As not all describers are translators AD training should include intercultural competence.

Audio	Subtitles
Deutsch	✓ Off
✓ English	Dansk
English [Audio Description]	Deutsch
Español	English [CC]
Español (Latinoamericano)	Español
Français	Español (Latinoamericano)
Italiano	Français
Japanese	Italiano
Polski	Nederlands
Português (Brasil)	Norsk
	Polski
	Português
	Português (Brasil)



- Introduction of templates could help to offer audio description in multiple languages:
 - Not all describers-translators have competence in all cultures.
 - Templates need to be of consciously made, of good quality and annotated.
- Introduction of templates had serious consequences for the professionals and industry in subtitling.

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THANK YOU

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