

**A STUDY ON THE AUDIENCE RECEPTION OF THEATRE SURTITLES:
Surtitling in a Francophone Minority Context in Canada
and the Language Learning Potentials of Theatre Surtitles**

by

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Abstract

This mixed-methods study focuses on the audience reception of theatre surtitles in a Francophone minority theatre context in Western Canada at *L'UniThéâtre* in Edmonton, Alberta. The main objective of this multifaceted research was to measure the perceptions of and reactions to English surtitles according to the participants' first language (French L1, French and English L1, English L1, Other L1) in order to gain an understanding of how mono- and bilingual audiences make use of theatre surtitles, and how surtitles affect their reception of a theatre production. The results were contrasted with Griesel's audience model (2005, 2007, 2009) in order to demonstrate how the model for conventional surtitling contexts must be further nuanced for theatre surtitling in Francophone minority contexts in Canada. Another goal of this study was to evaluate whether the chosen surtitling strategy of condensed-direct translation, based on the concept of literal transfer, is appropriate for such surtitling contexts. The main hypothesis of this study is based on Ladouceur's previous research (2013a; 2013c) which outlines that it is important to reproduce the source text as close to its original form in the target text since bilingual Francophone audience members simultaneously have access to both the source text and the target text. It was assumed that this method of translation would minimize the distraction to Francophone audience members for whom the surtitles are not a necessity and subsequently, reduce the potential of these audience members judging the accuracy and legitimacy of the English translation. It was also hypothesized that this strategy is a more suitable strategy to help French language learners understand and acquire the source language spoken on stage, since past research on subtitles indicate that literal transfer provides learners with a more or less direct access to the second language they are learning and that this strategy is more supportive to low proficiency learners both psychologically and linguistically. An additional objective of this study was to measure the effect of the technical aspects of surtitles on the reception process and to test whether or not this translation strategy is

suitable on a technical level, since longer surtitles automatically increase the reading speed required to absorb the surtitles. The results of this study provide a framework upon which to create surtitles for use within multicultural and bilingual contexts, such as the Francophone minority contexts in Canada, as well as for theatre productions destined to a globalized market. On a technical level, the results of this study help to further define the limits and potentials of the technical aspects of surtitles and to provide a better understanding of their impact on reception. The framework for measuring the audience reception of surtitles developed in this study is useful for advancing research on surtitles and audience reception. On a sociolinguistic level, the results provide a clear portrait of how audience members from various language backgrounds and with varying levels of French proficiency make use of surtitles in this Francophone minority theatre context and also reveal that surtitles offer several benefits to language learners.

Résumé

Cette étude qualitative et quantitative porte sur la réception des surtitres pour le théâtre dans un contexte francophone minoritaire de l'Ouest du Canada à *L'UniThéâtre* à Edmonton en Alberta. L'objectif principal de cette recherche est d'évaluer la réception du public aux surtitres anglais en fonction de leur langue maternelle (français, français et anglais, anglais ou autre) dans le but de mieux comprendre de quelle façon les spectateurs mono- et bilingues emploient les surtitres et comment ces derniers affectent la réception qu'ils ont d'une pièce de théâtre. Les résultats obtenus sont comparés avec le modèle de spectateurs conçu par Griesel pour les contextes de surtitrage conventionnels (2005, 2007, 2009) afin de démontrer qu'il est nécessaire de réévaluer ce modèle pour ce qui est de la pratique du surtitrage dans les contextes francophones minoritaires du Canada. Un autre objectif de cette recherche est d'évaluer si la stratégie de « traduction condensée-directe », basée sur le concept de « transfert littéral », est appropriée pour de tels

contextes de surtitrage. L'hypothèse principale de cette étude est basée sur des recherches précédentes effectuées par Ladouceur (2013a; 2013c) qui soulignent l'importance de reproduire aussi fidèlement que possible le texte cible étant donné que le public francophone bilingue a accès simultanément au texte source et au texte cible. On a supposé que cette stratégie réduirait la distraction que les surtitres pourraient causer aux spectateurs francophones bilingues qui n'ont pas forcément besoin de surtitres, ce qui limite également leur propension à juger de la qualité de la traduction anglaise. On a ainsi supposé que cette stratégie est mieux adaptée aux apprenants du français au vu de recherches antérieures qui indiquent que le transfert littéral donne aux apprenants un accès direct à leur langue seconde. De plus, cette stratégie aide surtout les débutants du point de vue psychologique et linguistique. Cette étude a également pour objectif de mesurer la façon dont les aspects techniques des surtitres ont un effet sur la réception d'une pièce et de déterminer si la stratégie choisie convient. Les résultats de cette étude nous fournissent un cadre pour la création des surtitres pour des contextes multiculturels et bilingues, tels que les contextes francophones minoritaires au Canada, ainsi que pour des productions de théâtre destinées à des marchés mondialisés. Sur le plan technique, les résultats de cette recherche aident à mieux définir les limites et potentiels des aspects techniques des surtitres. Elle nous permet également de mieux comprendre la façon dont ceux-ci affectent la réception du public. Le cadre conçu pour évaluer la réception des surtitres dotera les chercheurs d'un outil qui leur permettra de poursuivre les recherches dans le domaine. Sur le plan sociolinguistique, les résultats renseignent sur l'usage que font des surtitres les spectateurs en contexte francophone minoritaire selon leur profil linguistique et degré de compétence en français. Nous montrons ainsi que les surtitres peuvent offrir plusieurs avantages aux apprenants d'une langue seconde, en l'occurrence le français.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Milane Pridmore-Franz. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, under the Project Names “A Study on the Audience Reception of Theatre Surtitles”, No. Pro00049383 which expired on Friday, November 13, 2015 and “Study on the Audience Reception of Theatre Surtitles PART II – Questionnaire for Artistic and General Directors of Theatres”, No. Pro00055785, which expired on Wednesday, March 30, 2016.

Parts of this thesis are English replications of a French article written by the author of this dissertation. It was published as Pridmore-Franz, M. (2015). La pratique du surtitrage en contexte minoritaire. *Convergences francophones*, 2(2), 59-69. This article was written for the conference: “Journée d’étude « le(s) figure(s) du traducteur”, which took place at Mount Royal University, Calgary, Alberta on April 30, 2015. The above-mentioned publication serves as a preliminary reflection on the outcomes of this study. The original manuscript for this publication was written in English, and while the structure and some content of the English manuscript were modified in the published French version, the unpublished English version greatly resembles this publication.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AVT	Audiovisual Translation
COC	Canadian Opera Company
DHH	Deaf and Hard of Hearing
L1	First language
SDH	Subtitles for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
SrDH	Surtitles for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
SL	Source Language
ST	Source Text
TA	Target Audience
TL	Target Language
TT	Target Text
UBC	University of British Columbia
WPM	Words Per Minute

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION: THE EVOLUTION OF THEATRE SURTITLES AND THE CANADIAN CONTEXT

Surtitling is a form of Audiovisual Translation (AVT) that has grown into an innovative field within Translation Studies, gaining momentum in academic research beginning in the 1980s with the widespread adoption of surtitles in opera houses. However, research on surtitles has only recently evolved to include studies on their use within the theatrical domain. Over the past two decades, surtitling has become an efficient and cost-effective means of expanding audience numbers and increasing the visibility of theatre productions, especially in international and minority contexts, and has subsequently become the most dominant mode of Theatre Translation (Griesel, 2005, p. 64). Consisting of interlingual or intralingual translations that are designed for a specific target language audience and displayed live above the stage in synchronisation with the dialogue (or singing) and action of a live performance, surtitles, also commonly referred to as supertitles, are now recognized and accepted by opera houses and theatres around the world as a beneficial means of increasing the accessibility of their productions. Yet surtitles do not only help to increase accessibility, they are also an important vector of cultural and linguistic transfer on a diverse number of stages around the world, allowing for the preservation of operatic or theatrical productions in their original language and forms, and by extension, the preservation of their cultural dimension and authenticity (Dewolf, 2003, p.108; Ladouceur, 2013c).

Perhaps due to the rather recent interest in surtitles as a form of AVT and the meagre (albeit growing) amount of literature on the topic, the origins of surtitles are not well-documented (Burton, 2010, p.180) in the existing body of research, resulting in several different claims regarding their first use. The general assertion is that surtitles were first adopted in Canada by the Canadian Opera Company (COC) in Toronto for a production of Richard Strauss' *Elektra* on January 21, 1983 (Bataillon, Muhleisen & Diaz, 2016, p. 7; Burton, 2010, p. 180¹; Griesel, 2007, p. 40; Low, 2002, p.97). In fact, the COC itself claims that a team consisting of its former Director of Operations, John Leberg, its former Director, Lotfi Mansouri, as well as Gunta Dreifelds² “invented SURTITLES™” – an accurate statement, since the word “surtitles” (along with its

¹ Although Burton cites the incorrect year of 1984.

² Gunta Dreifelds now operates SURTITLES™ as an independent consultant, with the COC remaining a major client.

French counterpart “surtitres”) was coined by the COC and became its official trademark with the advent of this first surtitled performance in Canada (COC.ca; Low, 2002, p.97; Surtitles.com, 2004, “Who are we?”). Be that as it may, Burton (2010) claims that there are “reports of live surtitling (in Danish) in Copenhagen before this date” and suggests that “reputedly the first live titles in an opera house were in Beijing in 1983”, but that technically, “these were neither sub-nor sur-titles, as they were in Chinese and therefore displayed vertically at the side of the stage” (p.180). While SURTITLES™ is proclaimed to be the first surtitling system developed – using slides and slide projectors and later, video projectors – some researchers suggest that the first systems were developed during the 80s in Scandinavia, particularly in Finland (Griesel 2007, p. 40; Griesel, 2009, p. 122) and Denmark (Bataillon et al., 2016, p. 37).

Although the current understanding is that surtitles originated in an operatic context, Ivarsson and Carroll (1998) note that prior to their increased popularity in the operatic domain, surtitles, although they were not called so at the time, were in fact experimentally used for theatre since as early as the 1920s, citing Erwin Piscator’s and Bertolt Brecht’s productions in Germany (p.19). Another account of the experimental use of surtitle-like projections took place in 1949, when French and German “subtitles” were projected on screens placed at the sides of the stage for a bilingual French-German production by the *Jean-Marie Serreau* theatre company at the *Comédie des Champs-Élysées* for an audience of German and French university students (Triolet & Lebre-Peytard, 1981, p.114-115). Additionally, there is record of projected translations used for a production of *Mutter Courage und Ihre Kinder* by the *Berliner Ensemble* which was performed in Paris in 1954 (Bataillon et al., 2016, p.14).

Despite the discrepancies regarding the first stages of the development of surtitles, it is nonetheless incontestable that the practice of surtitling rapidly gained popularity subsequent to the successful implementation of surtitles at the COC, where they were first used to “make opera accessible to everyone” (The Canadian Press). In the years following, opera houses in the United States and across Europe began using surtitles systematically for their foreign-language opera productions and over the course of the 90s, the use of surtitles in opera houses continued to grow with their success in expanding audiences, despite much initial aversion to the practice by theatre directors and purists alike (Low, 2002, p. 97-99; Vervecken 2012a, p. 241; 2012b, p. 229). Today, many opera houses surtitle all of their productions, including those that are in the audience’s native language (Burton, 2010, p.180; Griesel, 2007, p. 57).

During the 90s, surtitles eventually gained popularity in the context of theatre, and have become “the most common mode of transmission for guest performances” of foreign-language theatre productions (Griesel 2005: 67). The practice was also quickly adopted for international theatre festivals, such as the famous Avignon and Edinburgh festivals, using English as the *lingua franca* to facilitate the comprehension of a heterogeneous international audience (Dewolf, 2003, p.103; Griesel, 2007, p. 37-40; Ladouceur, 2013a). Since the late 1990s and early 2000s, certain theatres located in touristic destinations have also made regular use of English (and sometimes French) surtitles in order to broaden the reception of their productions to tourists and international audiences in general. For instance, we can think of the *Stadsschouwburg* in Amsterdam, the *Schaubühne, Deutsches Theater* or the *Volksbühne* in Berlin, as well as *Theatre in Paris* which had its official launch in April 2014.

Theatre surtitles have also evolved to provide accessibility to the hearing impaired. Surtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing (SrDH) differ from standard intralingual/interlingual surtitles in that they also incorporate non-verbal auditory signals (Vervecken, 2012a, p. 251), much like captions for the deaf and hard of hearing for television or subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing (SDH) for film. Additionally, in less common contexts, surtitles are now even being used at conferences, political meetings and concerts (Vervecken 2012b, p. 231).

Although not usually designed specifically for pedagogical applications, surtitles are also used for purposes of language acquisition. For instance, surtitled performances may be exploited by audience members or school groups who are learning the source language of the production (Vervecken, 2012b, p.253). Furthermore, theatre surtitles also serve as a tool to promote accessibility for minorities. For instance, the theatre department of the University of British Columbia (UBC) sought out to make their productions accessible to members of Vancouver’s large immigrant communities with the use of surtitles. In 2009, the UBC offered Korean surtitles for an English language production and in 2010, a bilingual Cantonese-English production included surtitles in both of these languages (Vervecken, 2012a, p. 252).

Among the numerous contexts into which surtitling has evolved since their initial use for operas, a very unique surtitling phenomenon has been occurring on Francophone stages in Canada since the early 2000s, where several professional Francophone theatre companies use English surtitles on a regular basis to accompany their French-language productions. Located in cities where English is the predominantly spoken language, where Francophone communities are

substantially less concentrated than in Eastern regions of Canada, and where French remains a minority language and culture, these theatres have resorted to English surtitles in order to expand their audience and make their theatre accessible to exogamous couples and families, to Francophiles and French-language learners, as well as to theatre enthusiasts in general. In Ontario, *Théâtre français de Toronto* began using surtitles in 2005, followed by *Théâtre la catapulte* in Ottawa, which began implementing surtitles for some of its productions in 2009, with the *Théâtre du Nouvel-Ontario* in Sudbury following suit in 2012. In Western Canada, *La Troupe du Jour* in Saskatoon has been surtitling its productions since 2007, while *Le Cercle Molière* in Winnipeg only recently started including a genre of captioning similar to surtitling for some productions in 2014. *L'UniThéâtre* in Edmonton has adopted a regular use of surtitles since 2008, with the exception of one theatre season, and *Théâtre la seizième* in Vancouver initiated the use of surtitles on an occasional basis in 2007, but have regularly integrated English surtitles into their productions since 2013.

We can see from the examples provided that surtitles have evolved and been adapted to a diversity of contexts since their early development. Viewed from a chronological perspective, the evolution of surtitles can thus be divided into three principal stages:

- 1.) 1980s-1990s: Development of opera surtitles
- 2.) 1990s-Present: Development of theatre surtitles (International guest performances; International theatre festivals; International theatre hubs)
- 3.) 2000-Present: Theatre surtitling in Francophone minority contexts in Central and Western Canada; Accessibility for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (SrDH); Surtitling for minorities; Other surtitling contexts (conferences/meetings, concerts)

Of course, each of these surtitling contexts involve differing translation policies, norms and translation strategies, since the “specificity of surtitling is [...] marked by the context in which it takes place” and especially because “[t]ext, context and reception all determine the process and products of surtitling” (Mateo, 2007a, p.171). As with any form of translation, surtitles are created with an intended target audience and clearly, the audiences for the numerous contexts in which surtitles are currently used differ quite broadly. In reference to subtitling, Gottlieb (2004) explains that “interlingual subtitling is bound to have a number of societal and language-political

implications” (p.87). This comment can equally be applied to surtitles and is perhaps even more significant for the context of theatre surtitling, given that theatre is a cultural locus.

The varieties of contexts in which surtitles are used encompass different relationships between the source language (SL) and the target language (TL). If we adapt Gottlieb’s (2012) list of usage scenarios for subtitles (p.45) to the context of surtitling, the aforementioned surtitling contexts can be classified into the following SL-TL categories:

<p>1.) Surtitling from a foreign language into the domestic majority language or into a world language (e.g. English)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opera • Guest opera/theatre performances • International theatre festivals • International theatre hubs (tourist destinations) • Other (non-operatic/theatrical) contexts
<p>2.) Surtitling from a domestic majority language into the same language (<i>intralingual</i>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opera • SrDH
<p>3.) Surtitling from a majority language into an immigrant language (or minority language)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surtitling for minorities (immigrant populations) ⇒ UBC, Vancouver, Canada
<p>4.) Surtitling from a national minority language into a majority language</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surtitling in minority language contexts ⇒ Francophone theatres in Central/Western Canada

Figure 1: Typology of Surtitling Contexts According to SL-TL Relationship

In conventional surtitling contexts such as opera, the standard SL-TL relationship normally involves translating from a foreign language into the domestic majority language, and in the case of international theatre festivals, into a world language (e.g. English). The majority of audience members in such cases generally do not have sufficient knowledge of the SL to understand what is being said on stage. Since there is less tension between sociolinguistic and politico-cultural implications in such contexts, there is greater flexibility with regards to the translation strategy chosen and a lesser requirement to consider the needs of a diverse target audience (TA), since the surtitles are catering to the majority of the spectators. However, in the Canadian context, the surtitles are conveying a translation from the national minority language (French) into the national majority language (English). The intended target audience is therefore an important issue to consider: the surtitles are not simply catering to an Anglophone target audience, but to a *bilingual* (and even multilingual) one as well, since most Francophones living

outside of the French-speaking province of Québec and some areas of the Eastern regions of Canada are necessarily bilingual. This, along with the minority context of the French language and culture, renders the surtitling process and its subsequent reception more complex, as will be detailed in the sections to follow. For these reasons, taking consideration of the diversity of the audience, their differing needs and the linguistic and cultural dimension underlying this surtitling context might be said to be even more important in this minority situation than it is in conventional surtitling contexts.

Gambier (2009) proposes that “[the] social dimension of AVT services demands a better knowledge of viewers’ needs, reading habits, and reception capacity” and maintains that “[m]uch work remains to be done in this area in order to ensure that technological progress can best satisfy users’ demands and expectations.” However, as mentioned, research on surtitling remains at an embryonic stage, consisting for the most part of studies on opera surtitling, with few concentrating on theatre surtitling. Furthermore, the lack of studies on the reception of surtitles, and of AVT products in general, make it problematic to assess which types of surtitling conventions and strategies are most appropriate for accommodating audiences’ needs in these varieties of contexts, which is why empirical studies of this nature are desperately needed.

1.1.) Audience Reception of Theatre Surtitles: A Much-Needed Study

In fact, within the current body of research on AVT and surtitles, several researchers have made explicit calls for studies on the reception of surtitles, proclaiming that the field is lacking valuable empirical research on audience reception, which would help shed light upon surtitling strategies and methods that might help maximize the audiences’ surtitled experience (Dewolf, 2003, p. 92; Gambier, 2006, p.5; Griesel, 2005, p.74; Mateo, 2007b, p.136; Oncins, 2013b, p.2; Vervecken, 2012a). Furthermore, as Gambier (2009) ascertains, “[v]ery few studies have examined the production and reception or the cultural and linguistic impact of audiovisual translation” (p.17), especially with regards to surtitles.

As Mateo (2007a) notes, in order to "contribute to our understanding of the process and products of surtitling" (151) it is necessary to understand audiences in their target communicative situation (p.136). Additionally, Ramière (2006) has expressed, with reference to the cultural

impact of AVT products, that it is “necessary to adopt a more pragmatic approach to research in AVT and to highlight the crucial importance of context in the selection of translation strategies” (p.160). Since surtitles have a linguistic and cultural dimension, it is important to examine how sociolinguistic, cultural and political aspects affect surtitling strategies, and subsequently how a chosen strategy impacts the reception of a production for audience members of differing linguistic backgrounds (Dewolf, 2003, p. 93; Gambier, 2009, p.19).

At present, no study of this nature has been conducted on a broad-scale and audience reactions to and perceptions of theatre surtitles remain understudied. Moreover, much of the past research on subtitling and on opera surtitles has only been intuitively applied to theatre surtitles (Griesel, 2005, p.10). However useful the studies from other disciplines of AVT may be, more pragmatic research needs to be conducted on surtitles, and theatre surtitles specifically, in order to gain a thorough understanding of the effects that they have on the audiences’ reception. Given that many of the current reports on audience preferences and reactions to surtitles are based on “subjective reactions by individuals” (Griesel, 2005), Griesel suggests that “theatre translation is a complex translation process, which can be assessed using objective criteria” (p.67) and that the audience can serve as a “quality-control” function to evaluate surtitling adequacy (2007, p.129). Conducting research on the reception of surtitles would “help determine effective practices [...] may establish how surtitles are received by the audience and, among other things, may also show audience preferences” (Vervecken, 2012a, p. 254). Knowing the effects of surtitles on the audiences’ reception would enable researchers to propose methodologies and establish a framework for creating better suited surtitles in specific contexts.

However, “many different factors intervene in surtitling products”, including not only “the textual nature of the source texts” and “contextual and reception factors”, but also “technical constraints” (Mateo, 2007a, p.178) which can introduce several obstacles to reception (Griesel, 2005, p.70). Although technical aspects are “external aspects [...]which are not directly relevant to the translation process”, they nevertheless “determine the way in which AVT is produced, displayed and consumed” (Oncins, 2013, p.9). Measuring the reception of a subtitled performance is therefore not limited to understanding the cultural and linguistic impacts of a chosen translation strategy within a particular target communicative situation, but also entails consideration of the technical constraints imposed on the subtitled product and an evaluation of how these factors influence the audiences’ ability to make use of the surtitles.

1.2.) Under-development in Research on Technical Aspects of Surtitling and Non-Standardization of Conventions

When attempting to measure the reception of a surtitled production, technical aspects should not be ignored since they have a direct impact on how the audience receives the surtitled product. Aspects such as the screen position and height, the general format of the surtitles on the screen including text positioning, font and text size, brightness and colour, the line distribution and segmentation, amount of characters per line and per title, as well as the display times and synchronization of the surtitles with the performance, are as important as the translation strategy chosen when ensuring the adequate reception of a surtitled performance.

While some research has been conducted on technical aspects of surtitles, particularly for the operatic context, “many issues are still in need [of] research such as the presentation of surtitles” (Orero & Matamala, 2007, p.267). There is currently no established framework of technical conventions for surtitles, and the research that does address the technical aspects contains inconsistent and sometimes contradictory information. Furthermore, many of the current non-standardized conventions outlined in the research have been adopted or adapted from the research on subtitling, yet regardless of the similarities of these two modes of translation and however helpful the research on subtitling is, both types of AVT have their particularities which require separate attention (Mateo, 2007a, p.170). For instance, the distance between the action on stage and the surtitle screen are assumed to result in the need for longer display times than subtitling, since the audience requires more time to mediate their attention between watching the performance and reading the surtitles, although “to date, no research has been conducted on how (quickly) the audience reads and absorbs surtitles” (Vervecken, 2012a, p.237) and “no reception studies have been undertaken to evaluate user satisfaction according to the various positions” of surtitling screens and the presentation of the surtitles (Oncins, 2013, p. 50). In addition, since the minimum and maximum display times are currently unestablished and untested on audiences, “[t]his naturally renders reception far more difficult, sometimes even preventing it, or forces the audience to decide for or against one or more theatrical or translatory signs” (Griesel, 2005, p.10). This is why a “greater awareness of these obstacles to reception could lead to serious improvements in surtitling” (p.10). There is therefore an existing need to test the technical aspects of surtitles on audiences in order to gain a better understanding of their impact on reception.

This would enable researchers and practitioners to better establish technical guidelines for surtitles with the goal of improving the audience experience. As Vervecken (2012a) puts it: “the present and future success of surtitling [...] is very much dependent on [...] providing the research and information that will enable professionals to reach their full potential” (p.255). With available empirical data at their disposition, specialists on surtitles will have more relevant material to work with, which will enable them to make further inquiries and expand the research in the field.

Having been responsible for the conception and projection of surtitles at *L’UniThéâtre* from 2012 to 2015 under the supervision of Dr. Louise Ladouceur³, I took advantage of this opportunity to attempt to fill the existing gap in research on the audience reception of surtitles. The practice of surtitling in Francophone minority theatres serves as an excellent context for this genre of study: the types of audience members in these surtitling contexts are diverse and thus the various ways in which the surtitles are used and perceived by the differing audience types extend to most surtitling contexts, regardless of the fact that the cultural context is unique to the Canadian situation at hand. Furthermore, being that reception of the technical aspects are not primarily contingent on the linguistic and cultural dimension, the outcomes of this research with regard to the technical aspects of surtitles are also applicable to most theatre surtitling contexts. The unique problematic aspect regarding the surtitling strategy adopted for the creation of the surtitles at *L’UniThéâtre* – detailed in the next two sections – challenges some of the currently assumed parameters for technical aspects and in result, this study can also serve to further define the limits and potentials of the technical aspects for theatre surtitling.

1.3.) Theatre Surtitling in a Francophone Minority Context: Sociolinguistic and Cultural Implications

AVT products can be used as a means of promoting multilingualism and multiculturalism in countries with increasingly diverse and heterogeneous populations, but also as a tool to encourage social integration (Días Cintas, 2008, p.6). Since theatrical performances are normally rooted in a specific cultural context, theatre surtitles play an intermediary role between two

³ Dr. Louise Ladouceur provided the funding for the surtitles at *L’UniThéâtre* from 2008-2012. The funding was made available through a Community-University Research Alliance Grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for a project on the role of theatre in Western Canadian Francophone identity.

languages and cultures and have the inherent capacity to contribute to intercultural and interlingual understanding and appreciation. While AVT products place the viewers in an intercultural position (Ramière, 2006, p. 6), in the context of theatre, this aspect is all the more pertinent since audience members are physically taking part in an authentic cultural experience.

It is in this sense that surtitles play a unique role in the minority Francophone theatres of Central and Western Canada. In these Francophone minority contexts, theatre surtitles allow audience members to be immersed in a French-language theatre performance, while hearing the SL (French) and simultaneously reading the surtitles in the TL (English). Audience members who do not know French, can thus be exposed to the authentic French-Canadian, regional and standard French accents and to plays that are written by local, regional and international Francophone playwrights. Surtitles thus give greater accessibility and visibility to Francophone cultures, but more specifically, to the French-Canadian culture, in communities that are located in Anglo-dominant contexts. Additionally, they render Francophone theatre inclusive to all members of the community, regardless of their ability to understand, speak, or hear French.

In view of the fact that French Canadian communities of Central and Western Canada – in the provinces of Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British-Columbia respectively – “face strong, not to say overwhelming, competition from English” (Killick, 2010, p.173) these Francophone theatres are placed in a vulnerable economic situation (Gagnon, 2009, p.13). In spite of surtitles being a vector of cultural exchange, they were initially adopted by these professional Francophone theatres because of this volatile economic situation. In a minority context, these Francophone theatres must compete with a number of English-language theatre companies and due to the small concentration of Francophone communities in these regions, “each production involves considerable effort and determination to reach what is essentially a very small audience” (Ladouceur, 2013c, p.344-345). Initially an innovative method used to increase audience numbers, surtitles have brought many positive gains, both economically and culturally, to these Francophone theatres. For instance, when surtitles were first pioneered by Guy Mignault⁴ at the *Théâtre français de Toronto*, it resulted in an increase of their regular attendance ratings between 20% to 50% (Nadeau, 2013). However, surtitles not only increased audience numbers but also helped place Francophone minority theatres on more equal grounds with their Anglophone

⁴ After 19 years of service, Guy Mignault retired from his position as Artistic Director of *Théâtre français de Toronto* in June 2016.

counterparts, making it possible for Francophone theatre companies to gain cultural recognition through nominations for awards that they would otherwise not have received (Ladouceur, 2013b, p.58; Saint-Cyr, 2013).⁵ Moreover, they have even attracted members of the deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) community (Guy Mignault in Nadeau, 2013), serving by extension a function they were not intended for, but nevertheless making theatre more inclusive and accessible to members of the hearing impaired communities which otherwise would not be able to experience theatre without a sign language interpreter.

While surtitles may have brought many benefits to the Francophone theatres of Central and Western Canada, their use can also be considered as rather controversial by the Francophone community. A leading expert on theatre surtitling in Canada's Francophone minority contexts, Ladouceur has published a comprehensive amount of research on this topic and has highlighted the complex interplay of sociolinguistic and politico-cultural aspects that accompanies the use of English surtitles in these theatres (Ladouceur 2012a, 2012b, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c, 2014). Ladouceur emphasizes that the presence of English surtitles also intensifies the minority position of the French-Canadian language and culture and can be perceived as counterintuitive to their preservation since the French language no longer stands on its own, and this underlines its fragility (Ladouceur, 2010; 2013b). In these Francophone minority theatre contexts, it is therefore necessary to choose a balanced surtitling approach that can mediate this sociolinguistic and cultural tension, with serious consideration towards the needs of a diverse (bilingual) audience, and with special regard to the Francophone audience members who remain the primary patrons of these theatres.

1.4.) Hypothesis and Problematic of Study: Surtitling for Bi/Multilingual Audiences – Beyond Griesel's Audience Model

The sociolinguistic and cultural dimension plays a decisive role in the translation strategy chosen for the surtitles at *L'UniThéâtre*. As Gambier (2009) states: "The concept of translation strategy varies at the macro- and micro- levels, and with respect to the socio-political and cultural effects of AVT" (p.19). At the macro level, we must consider the relationship between the SL

⁵ For instance, *La Troupe du Jour* in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan has received and been nominated for the Saskatoon and Area Theatre Awards (SATA) and *L'UniThéâtre* in Edmonton, Alberta received the Elizabeth Sterling Haynes Award for "outstanding contribution to theatre in Edmonton" in 2013.

and TL cultures within the given surtitling context, as well as the complex network of interconnections between the performance (the ST) and the surtitles (the TT). From an audience perspective, it is important to consider the overall reception of the surtitles on behalf of all audience members while taking into account the sociolinguistic and cultural context at hand. At the micro-level, among other factors, the needs of each group of audience members need to be considered as well as the impact that the translation strategy will have on perceptions of the surtitles and the performance according to differing linguistic groups.

In conventional surtitling contexts, the translation strategy is however regulated by the constraints of space and time which result from the “separation between the performed source text and the written target text destined to be read by the audience during the performance” (Carlson, 2006, p.197). As Mateo (2007a) notes: “The difficulties and strategies in surtitling are mostly determined by the need for synchronization with the performance on stage and for condensing the text due to the requirements of the projecting screen and the audience’s reading speed” (p.170). The surtitles should not interfere with the audiences’ capacity to focus their attention on the theatrical production, which conventionally leads to the need to condense the TT so that “the message is delivered as succinctly as possible” and to ensure readability (Ladouceur, 2013c, p.352). In many conventional surtitling contexts, creating surtitles entails simplification of the text (p.97): the requirements of surtitles are to help audience members follow the plot and understand the emotions of characters on stage, all the while remaining relatively unobtrusive (Orero & Matamala, 2007, p.267). Because their primary function is to facilitate the audience’s comprehension, surtitles are often presented as a summary, transmitting only the minimal sense of the performance with regards to the dialogue (p.109). As Oncins (2013b) reveals, “there is a consensus amongst professionals and academics about the need to be brief, to use simple and clear structures and to be unobstructive in style” (p.12). Past research on opera surtitles greatly emphasizes this fact. For instance, Burton (2010) states that in opera surtitling, “we are trying to convey *what* is being said, not *how* it is being said” (p.184) and Dewolf (2003) qualifies surtitles for the opera as “dissected” (p.98) or “fragmented” (p.109) translations that are necessarily incomplete.

However, like subtitles, surtitles are “an *overt* type of translation” and “lay themselves bare to criticism from everybody with the slightest knowledge of the source language” (Gottlieb, 1994, p.102; Griesel, 2005, p.67). When surtitling for bilingual audiences, such as the

Francophone minority contexts in Canada, reducing the text and omitting information is not ideal.

This is the premise for the hypothesis underlying the translation strategy chosen for the surtitles at *L'UniThéâtre*, whose audience (as well as those of the other minority Francophone theatres in Central and Western Canada) consists of “two distinct linguistic profiles, one consisting of monolingual anglophones and the other comprised of bilingual francophones and anglophones” (Ladouceur, 2013c, p.358). As Ladouceur has outlined:

Multiple target-audience profiles can be a source of constraints when the translation attempts to reproduce the message faithfully. When its sole function is to accompany and reproduce a source text, surtitling for an audience that might include spectators familiar with both the source and the target language, as is the case of Western Canadian francophones, demands increased accuracy. As a section of the target audience is able to understand the messages delivered in both languages, the surtitles must avoid sowing confusion or distraction by transmitting messages that conflict with those delivered orally (p.358).

While it may be possible to modify the structure or content of the ST and adapt the TT considerably to the SL culture in order to facilitate the comprehension of the TA in conventional surtitling contexts, in the Francophone minority contexts of Canada, taking such liberties would be subject to criticism (Ladouceur, 2013c, p.352; 2014, p.50-51). According to Ladouceur (2013a; 2013c), in surtitling contexts consisting of bilingual or multilingual spectators, it is important to reproduce the ST as close to its original form as possible since these audience members simultaneously have access to both the ST and the TT. Otherwise, any incoherencies between the ST and the TT could have a negative impact on their reception of the production since they could easily be distracted by what they would perceive as errors and thus be more prone to diverting their attention from the performance on stage. Even though bilingual Francophone audience members do not need the surtitles to understand a French performance, it is assumed that certain participants may feel tempted to compare the ST and TT. This assumption is the basis for the main hypothesis of this study: the closer the English text adheres to the French dialogue spoken on stage, the less disconcertment there will be towards the surtitles on behalf of bilingual Francophone viewers who are likely to judge the accuracy (and thus the legitimacy) of the English translation. Additionally, it is supposed that this would simultaneously minimize the distraction to Francophone audience members for whom the use of the surtitles is not a necessity. Preserving the characteristics of the syntactical and lexical structure of the original, within reasonable limits according to the space and time constraints of surtitling (all the while respecting

appropriate English grammar) may also be the best strategy to preserve the linguistic, cultural and artistic nature of the theatre performance. It is also hypothesized that as opposed to condensation – which entails reducing the ST to produce a shorter, more economic translation – this is a more suitable strategy to aid French-language learners understand and acquire the SL spoken on stage.⁶

However, this chosen translation strategy is in direct conflict with the constraint of space and time, since it results in more text presented on the surtitling screen. As such, this strategy might be contradictory and counterintuitive to the conventional goal of surtitling, which is to minimize the audiences' cognitive load and prevent surtitles from distracting the viewers from the performance itself by condensing the surtitled target text, as mentioned above. Using a strategy of minimal reduction and a more literal translation strategy of formal equivalence automatically entails longer and more verbose segments of text, requiring more reading on behalf of the audience and less time to focus on the performance (Vervecken, 2012a, p. 251-252). One of the primary focuses of this study is to test whether or not this translation strategy is suitable on a technical level, since longer surtitles automatically increase the reading speed required to absorb the surtitles. This may cause too much interference with the audience's ability to focus on the performance on stage. The results of this study should provide some indication as to whether this is a feasible surtitling strategy, or whether further reduction to the TT is required.

In order to determine whether or not the translation strategy served its intended purpose, the object of this study is to measure the audiences' different perceptions and reactions to the English surtitles according to the respective linguistic groups attending performances at *L'UniThéâtre*. The results should help to determine the impact of surtitles on bilingual and multilingual audiences and to improve upon methods that can address their special needs. These results will be applied to Griesel's threefold audience model (2005, p.67; 2007, p.19; 2009, p.122) in which the "audience [...] is divided into different groups; the circle of recipients includes native speakers of the target language[, native speakers] of the source language[,] as well as target-language (TL) speakers with a knowledge of the source language (SL)" (Griesel, 2005, p.66-67).

⁶ See next section: *Language Learning Potentials of Surtitles*

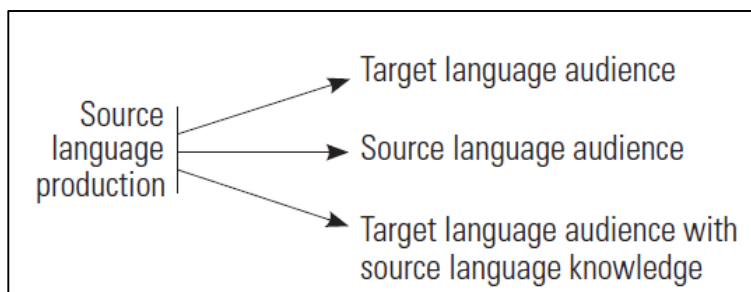


Figure 2: Griesel's Audience Model (2009, p. 122)

A secondary hypothesis of this study is that this model should be reevaluated, since it may in actuality be further nuanced in bilingual or multilingual contexts, where audience members of various linguistic backgrounds may use, react to and perceive the subtitles in differing manners (Ladouceur, 2014, p.51). From this perspective, Griesel's last audience category (TL audience with SL knowledge) can be further divided into sub-groups.

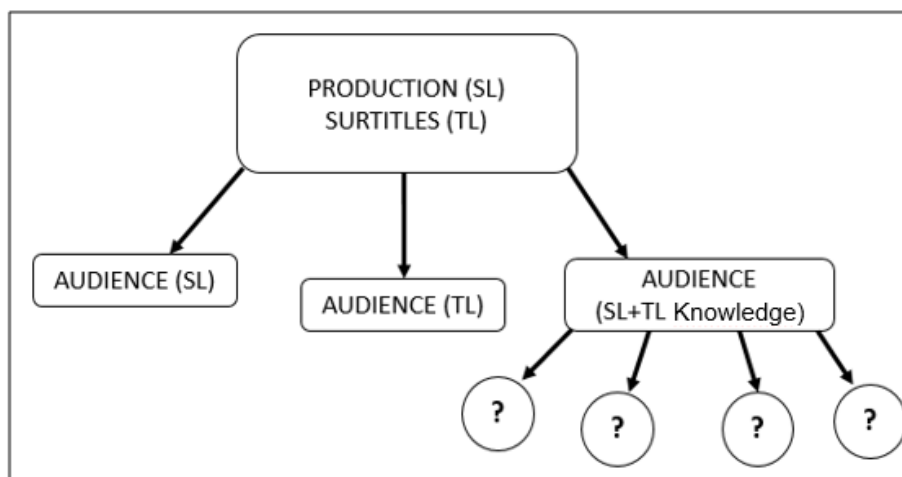


Figure 3: Griesel's Audience Model in Need of Re-Evaluation for Multilingual Contexts

Research questions related to determining whether this is the case include the following:

- 1.) What are the different sociolinguistic groups of audience members who (regularly) attend performances at *L'UniThéâtre*?
- 2.) Do different sociolinguistic groups react differently to subtitles? Do they have different way of making use of the subtitles?
- 3.) In which manner do the perceptions and reactions to the English subtitles on behalf of these different groups differ and/or converge?

In the existing research on theatre surtitling in the Francophone minority contexts of Western Canada, there are a number of suppositions regarding the manners in which the different linguistic groups of audience members use and perceive the surtitles (Liss, 2012). Liss makes several assertions about Francophile and Francophone audience members' use of the surtitles, stating that Francophiles, such as French language students use the surtitles as a linguistic resource to check comprehension (p.29) and that surtitles also help Francophones with comprehension of the ST, for understanding unfamiliar expressions, and will consult the surtitles when necessary and ignore them when their comprehension is unaffected (p.30). The results of this study will thus also serve to address the currently assumed manner in which the surtitles are used according to different groups of audience members in such Francophone minority surtitling contexts. Lastly, the overarching goal of this study is to use the results obtained from participants who attended productions at *L'UniThéâtre* to develop surtitling strategies that will improve the audience's experience and better respond to the needs of bilingual and non-Francophone audience members, including French-language learners.

1.5.) Language Learning Potentials of Surtitles

An aspect of secondary nature to this study is to explore the language learning potentials of surtitles. There are a large number of studies that have been published on subtitling which indicate that intra- and interlingual subtitling can promote incidental foreign language acquisition.⁷ Since many of these studies indicate that subtitles can be beneficial for language learning, these findings may also be applicable to the context of surtitles. Most interestingly to the main hypothesis of this present study regarding the chosen translation strategy, there are studies (Ghia, 2012; Pavesi & Perego 2007, 2008) which indicate that “the most advisable subtitling technique [for language learning] appears to be one whereby subtitles adhere to the source text as much as possible” (Pavesi & Perego 2007, p. 156). According to this study, literal “transfer” (Gottlieb, 1992; Pavesi & Perego, 2008) of the ST to the TT “is psychologically and linguistically more supportive to low proficiency learners” (Perego & Pavesi, 2007, p.163). Literal transfer is a type of translation strategy whereby the ST is reproduced as much as possible in both lexical and syntactic terms in

⁷ These studies will be detailed in Chapter 2, Section 2.4) *Incidental Language Acquisition and AVT*

the TT (Ghia, 2012, p.167) and is a type of strategy that is intended “to provide learners with a more or less direct access to the L2” (Pavesi & Perego, 2007, p. 156).

We can see that the translation strategy of literal transfer corresponds similarly to the translation strategy proposed by Ladouceur (2013c) which was chosen for the surtitles at *L’UniThéâtre*. In addition to the hypothesized effect that this translation strategy might have on the different linguistic groups of audience members at *L’UniThéâtre*, such an approach may also assist French language learners in acquiring the language, providing those with a beginner to intermediate knowledge of French with a tool for expanding their knowledge of French grammar, syntax and principally, vocabulary. Considering that *L’UniThéâtre* hosts many high-school groups from French Immersion and FSL programs and that there are many French-language learners in Edmonton who would benefit from an immersive theatre experience, this strategy may therefore additionally have beneficial consequences for French-language learning and serve a pedagogical function. Used in this manner, surtitles are a multipurpose tool to maximize cultural understanding, aid in language learning and ensure that the translated message remains as “faithful” as possible to the performance and the cultural elements involved therein.

The position of this research is that in the Francophone minority theatre contexts of Canada, surtitles not only serve to promote a better understanding of and appreciation for the French-Canadian language and culture, but can also be used as a tool for promoting and facilitating French-language learning within a principally Anglophone culture. Surtitles can provide beginner and intermediate French-language learners or Francophiles with the opportunity to directly experience the French-Canadian (and Francophone) culture(s) while not having to feel threatened by having to speak the language themselves. The surtitles can furthermore be used to help reinforce listening comprehension. In this sense, attending a subtitled French-language theatre performance, which is a form of linguistic immersion, is an occasion to be involved in an authentic cultural experience while passively learning about the language and culture by being exposed to authentic language input.

Being of secondary nature to the main objectives of this study, the language learning aspect of this present research is not intended to yield results that will support or negate previous findings. The results are meant to provide researchers with a preliminary understanding of the language learning potentials of theatre surtitles by gaining a general idea as to whether French language-learning participants found any benefit in attending a subtitled performance with regards

to language learning, and if so, how they benefitted from the experience. These results could provide researchers with a good starting point for future studies on language learning through theatre surtitling.

1.6.) The Surtitling Context in Minority Francophone Theatres of Western Canada and Ontario

Within the broader context of this study, it was deemed important to consult the Artistic and General Directors of the respective theatre companies in order to gain a greater perspective regarding the impact that surtitles have had and continue to have on these professional Francophone theatre companies. This would enable the researcher to provide an accurate synthesis of the use of surtitles in the Canadian surtitling context. Information regarding the questionnaire which was sent to the Artistic and General Directors by the researcher is included in Chapter 3, Section 3.2, and the summary of the results is provided in Chapter 4, Section 4.1.

1.7.) Research Perspective and Dissertation Outline

This dissertation research project was conducted using a pragmatic and heuristic Descriptive Translation Studies approach and can be categorized as applied social research. This study has a social focus which is aimed at understanding cause and effect relations between the chosen translation strategy for the surtitles at *L'UniThéâtre* and the technical aspects related to the surtitles, and their effects upon audience members according to the linguistic and cultural aspects specific to the Francophone minority theatre contexts and the different linguistic groups of audience members. The study was conducted in collaboration with *L'UniThéâtre*, in Edmonton, Alberta, and principally took place on its premises in the theatre of *La Cité francophone* with 19 occasions for data-collection. The dissertation in itself is empirically-focused and primarily data-driven, insofar as the goals of the research are also to test and build upon currently untested parameters and assumptions.

The topic of this research can be viewed through the lens of multiple disciplines, especially the fields of Media Studies, Cultural Studies, Intercultural Studies, Sociology, Cognitive Linguistics and Psycholinguistics. However, the past research and theoretical approaches applied to this study remain confined to the fields of Translation Studies and

specifically AVT and are based on previous research on surtitling when possible. However, they also draw from research on subtitling, seeing as this former mode of AVT shares much in common with the latter. Naturally, since Translation Studies is necessarily multidisciplinary, much of the past research, as well as this current study, is multidisciplinary in nature.

The data-collection and analysis was completed using a mixed-method approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to enhance the reliability of the results. Nonprobability sampling was used for the purposes of data-collection: specifically, mixtures of volunteer sampling, quota sampling, convenience sampling, and purposive sampling techniques. Random sampling was not feasible for this research project due the nature of applied social research. For this reason, the results of this study cannot be claimed to be statistically representative of *L'UniThéâtre*'s regular patronage, nor of Edmonton, Alberta's population.

Descriptions of the theoretical or methodological approaches chosen for this study, as well as the data-analysis and research methods, are detailed in Chapter 2 – *Literature Review and Theoretical Focus*, as well as in Chapter 3 – *Study Procedures*. Chapter 2 provides an overview of available methods and concepts for measuring reception; section 2.2 provides an outline of applicable research on the technical aspects of surtitles with regard to spatial and temporal parameters; section 2.3 focuses on research concerning the impact of translation strategies on differing audience types; and section 2.4 highlights applicable research on incidental language acquisition and AVT. A description of the study procedures regarding study participants, the surveys and the focus group, as well as data analysis procedures are found in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 provides an interpretation of the research results. Section 4.1 summarizes the surtitling context in Francophone minority theatres of Western Canada and Ontario according to the results of the secondary survey that was sent to the Artistic and General Directors of *Théâtre La Seizième*, *L'UniThéâtre*, *La Troupe du Jour*, *Cercle Molière* and *Théâtre français de Toronto*. Section 4.2 provides an analysis of the main survey results regarding the technical aspects, while linguistic and cultural aspects are analyzed in section 4.3, which provides a portrait of how different linguistic groups made use, or did not make use, of the surtitles, their reasons for using or not using the surtitles and their strategies for using or ignoring them, and also outlines the results pertaining to the language learning potentials of surtitles. This section concludes with a reflection on the overall influence of the surtitles on the audiences' experience. Chapter 5 serves as a conclusion which outlines the main outcomes of this study in connection with past research and

theoretical frameworks with regard to the technical aspects of surtitles and their effect on reception, linguistic and cultural aspects with regard to the reception of the surtitles in this Francophone minority context in Canada, as well as the potentials of surtitles for second-language acquisition and highlights aspects in need of further research.

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FOCUS

The following chapter provides a survey of the literature and past studies which are applicable and relevant to this study. Each section is relevant to a particular issue and includes an overview of approaches, frameworks, theories or findings I wish to apply, develop further or challenge. The first section (2.1.) details previous research with regards to measuring reception which were applied and adapted to this study. The next section (2.2.) includes a review of the past research that addresses the technical aspects of surtitles and serves to highlight the divergences that exist between them. The research on the technical aspects of surtitles is supplemented by research on established technical frameworks for subtitling. For ease of understanding and classification purposes, this section is divided into two subsections (a. and b.) which address each type of technical parameter. The third section (2.3.) explores the relationship between the ST, the TT and the target audiences and focuses on past research within the disciplines of subtitling and surtitling on translation strategies and their effect on the perception modes of different audience types. The fourth and last section (2.4) addresses past research on incidental language acquisition and AVT, with a focus on past studies on subtitling. The past research covered in this section is non-exhaustive; it is not intended to represent the complete scope of applicable research related to this topic.

2.1.) Measuring Reception

In order to measure an audience's reception of a product, one must select an appropriate framework for the context being examined. However, the research on the reception of AVT products remains limited in number and scope. Most of the existing studies have concentrated on the reception of subtitled or dubbed films or television shows, and rather than focusing intrinsically on reception, for the most part, these studies explore the target audience's *perception* of the AVT product, in terms of their level of comprehension or their preferences (i.e. Chiaro, 2006; Denton, 2007; Denton & Ciampini, 2012; Fuentes Luque, 2003). Many of these studies are opinion-based, qualitative studies. Others are eye-tracking studies for the context of subtitling or on the reception of subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing. Schauffler's (2012) study on the reception of different translation strategies for subtitling (formal equivalence/foreignization vs.

dynamic equivalence/domestication) with regards to wordplays and culture-specific references bears some similarities to this present study in terms of how participants' L2s are evaluated, as well as in terms of the types of questions addressed. For instance, the survey for this study included questions regarding participants' educational history and their formal L2 instruction, their extent of L2 use and their age of learning (p.130; p. 132-133).⁸

However, the frameworks applied to these studies all vary, and do not involve a comprehensive framework for the measurement of reception, nor do they correspond to the context of surtitling. The only study on audience reception of *surtitles* published thus far that I could find is a study conducted in Finland by Tanja Borg, who published a Master's thesis in 2008 on the reception of surtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing. While the thesis can be accessed on the University of Tampere's thesis database⁹ it is written in Finnish. Seeing as I do not have any knowledge of Finnish, I have had to resort to an English abstract that is available online (however seemingly unpublished) and titled in English: "Theatre Surtitles. The Aurally Handicapped as Target Audience." It should be noted that this study dealt with *intralingual* surtitles (SrDH) and focuses mainly on the audience's attitudes regarding surtitles. Nevertheless, this study does include aspects of methodology for measuring the technical aspects of reception that are applicable to this study (see section 3.2. – *Surveys and Focus Group*). Besides from this study, I could find no other applied studies on the audience reception of surtitles.

Regardless of the lack of studies on reception of AVT products, there are a number of researchers who have proposed certain methodologies for measuring reception which are applicable. For the purpose of this particular study, reader-response oriented reception theories used in the field of literature which view the reader as the source of meaning (Kovačič, 1995, p.377) are not applicable, since the object of research is not to understand how different audience members understood and interpreted the play(s) they saw. Reception theories in film which focus on "viewer response" with regards to the impact on and response by individual viewers (p.378) are much more applicable to the surtitling context.

Among the research regarding the reception of AVT products, concepts elaborated by Kovačič (1995), Chesterman (2007) and Gambier (2006, 2009) reveal themselves as most

⁸ Although, subsequent to the data-collection phase of this study, the scope of analysis was re-framed. Solely the participants' own impressionistic judgement of their L2 proficiency (self-rated fluency) was used for the analysis.

⁹ *TamPub* (<http://tampub.uta.fi/handle/10024/80219>)

pertinent towards establishing a framework for measuring reception. Kovačič (1995) argues that “reception” includes several dimensions, each of which “should be a part of a comprehensive model for research on subtitles reception” (p.376). By extension, the following dimensions can be applied to reception of AVT products similar to subtitles, such as surtitles. These dimensions (Kovačič, 1995, p. 376) include:

- 1.) socio-cultural issues;
- 2.) attitudinal issues of viewers’ preferences;
- 3.) the perceptual issue of decoding (reading and viewing) strategies;
- 4.) the impact of the cognitive environment on the decoding process and the audience’s ability to understand the sub[/sur]titled product.

According to a descriptive approach to translation – the traditional genre, in textual form – Chesterman (2007, p.179) proposes the following terminology for quality assessment of translation reception: 1.) *reaction*, 2.) *responses* and 3.) *translation repercussions*. *Reactions* are defined as being the effects of the translations (the textual) on the mental and emotional reactions of readers (the cognitive) (p.179), while *responses* are mental, emotional or communicative behaviour/reactions to a given translation (which in this context involves *both* the source text on stage, and the surtitled translation, functioning together to form the received product). Chesterman defines *repercussions* as “the effects of translations at the cultural level” and cites several examples such as “changes in the evolution of the target language, [...] in norms and practices, [...] or in the perception of cultural stereotypes” (p. 180).

Gambier (2009) broadens this discussion to the realm of AVT and with regards to subtitles in particular, to the question of the intended target audience: “how should we understand and measure reception with such a broad variety of recipients?” (p.22). Adapting Chesterman’s criteria for quality assessment to the context of AVT, Gambier (p.22) defines the categories as follows:

- 1.) Response (perceptual decoding);
- 2.) Reaction (psycho-cognitive issue/readability);
- 3.) Repercussion (viewers’ preferences and habits and the sociocultural context which affects the reception process).

Applied to AVT, Gambier's criteria, adapted from Chesterman's, encompass those dimensions put forth by Kovačič, addressing socio-cultural issues, attitudinal issues of viewers' preferences, as well as the perceptual/cognitive issue of decoding.

Perhaps the most comprehensive framework for research on and methodology regarding audience reception for the context of surtitling is Gambier's (2009) proposed variables for measuring the audience reception of subtitles. Gambier proposes that it is necessary to address both sociological variables (i.e. age, level of education, reading aptitudes, command of foreign languages, hearing and/or sight difficulties), as well as audiovisual variables (i.e. genre, interplay of images/dialogue) when measuring audience response and reaction, and proposes correlating these variables with a number of features pertaining to technical aspects (p.22-23), which can be classified into three main categories¹⁰:

- 1.) Space-time characteristics such as lead times (in/out time), exposure time, delay between speech and sub[/surtitles], position (left/centre justification), length, type and size of font;
- 2.) Textual parameters: text segmentation, lexical density, syntactic complexity and semantic coherence;
- 3.) Paratextual features: punctuation

In addition to the notions of *response*, *reaction* and *repercussion*, Gambier (2006) discusses the notions of *accessibility* and *usability*, which both have "implications for design" (p.4); the AVT product must be designed according to the needs of the target audience. As Gambier explains: "the context of reception of an AV product and its genre affect the decisions made by translators" and "[i]n all cases, the translator selects different strategies and assumes a certain knowledge and cognitive frame in the viewers" (2006, p.5). Assessing the usability and the causality of AVT products, such as surtitling, "can help us better understand the effects of screen translation" and "discern the needs of different users, to know the viewers' needs and reception capacity" (p.5). Gambier distinguishes *accessibility* as "a barrier-free situation" where "information is provided and easy to understand", and *usability* as "a measure of the effectiveness, efficiency and satisfaction with which specified users can achieve specified goals in a particular environment" and as a means of ensuring a "better experience for the user" (p.4). Similarly, Perego & Ghia

¹⁰ Features that were directly relevant to subtitles but not applicable to surtitling were not included here. Only those features relevant to surtitling have been included.

(2011) affirm that usability “is meant to offer easy to use, satisfying and user-oriented products which are cognitively effective and processed effortlessly” (p.178).

Gambier applies *relevance theory* as a means of qualifying the usability of an AVT product: “[e]ffectiveness, in terms of pragmatics, means that the greater the viewers’ processing effort, the lower is the relevance of the translation” (2006, p.5; 2009, p.22). While Chesterman defines relevance theory as relating to the “cognitive effects of any act of communication” (2007, p.179), Kovačič defines *relevance* as a “cost-benefit notion”, meaning that “we want to achieve maximum benefit (the maximum contextual effect) at minimum cost (the hearer’s [/viewer’s] minimum effort in processing a communicated assumption” (1994, p.246).

Together, Kovačič’s model for research on reception, Gambier’s proposed variables for measuring audience reception, Gambier’s terminology for quality assessment of the reception of AVT products, along with the notions of relevance, accessibility and usability as a means of qualifying the quality of the product and its reception capacity, form a comprehensive, functional and pragmatic framework for measuring the reception of AVT products for various audience/viewer types.

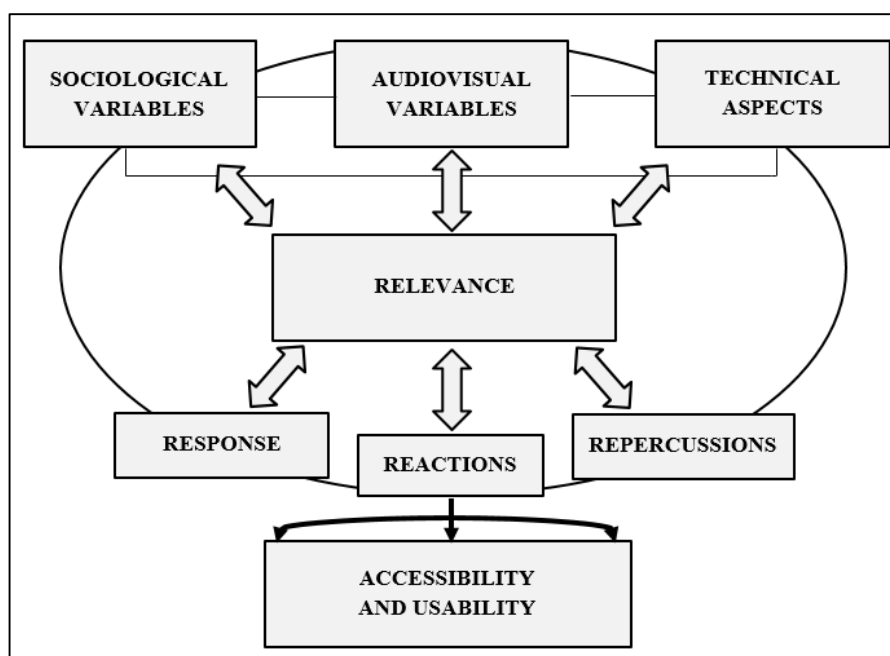


Figure 4: A Framework for Measuring the Audience Reception and Quality Assessment of AVT Products Such as Surtitles

This is the framework which was chosen to measure the reception of the English surtitles for this study. The reception of an AVT product such as surtitles is not linear; different audience types will respond and react to the subtitled product in varying manners. Audience members' responses and reactions, which, as defined above, result from their perceptual decoding ability (reading and viewing strategies) and the cognitive impact on their decoding process (their ability to understand), will depend heavily on audiovisual variables and technical aspects (in addition to the translation), and these will have a direct bearing on the relevance of the surtitles, subsequently determining the usability of the product. Repercussions are primarily determined by the sociological variables of the target audience and the sociocultural context, yet the sociological variables also have a direct bearing on the relevance, and thus, the usability of the surtitles. Such a framework takes into consideration the multiple aspects that have an effect on the reception of an AVT product such as surtitles.

2.2.) Technical Aspects

Technical aspects have a direct influence on the reception of a subtitled stage production. As mentioned, there is very little existing research on established technical guidelines for surtitles, regardless of the fact that their use is so widespread. Griesel (2009) calls attention to the fact that “theatre subtitling has to deal with wrongly positioned surtitles that cannot be seen from all places, with poor lighting or with surtitles that are displayed too fast, etc.” and highlights further that “unfortunately, obstacles of this kind seem to be the rule in theatre subtitling” (p.124). Additionally, Oncins (2013a) notes that the technical aspects of surtitles “are mainly aimed at not interfering with the stage production, rather than at providing accessibility to the audience” (p. 61), let alone ensuring the ultimate reception of the surtitles.

This section includes a review of past research which addresses the technical aspects of surtitles and is supplemented by research on subtitling. There are several studies regarding subtitling that are applicable to the practice of subtitling and which can be used, along with the results of this study, as a framework for establishing subtitling conventions related to spatial and temporal variables with the goal of ensuring a quality product and the best reception of subtitled productions. These variables encompass the technical aspects included in Gambier's (2009) proposed variables for measuring the audience reception of subtitles, which are being proposed

here as being adopted to the context of surtitles. As detailed in the previous section, Gambier's three main categories of features pertaining to the technical aspects of an AVT product like subtitles include space-time characteristics, textual parameters and paratextual features. For classification purposes, the first of Gambier's variables (space-time characteristics) has been divided into two principal categories: spatial and temporal, the first of which is being explored in the next section (a.). Since textual parameters (text segmentation, lexical density, syntactic complexity and semantic coherence) and paratextual features (punctuation) also impact the spatial dimension of surtitles, these two features are included as spatial parameters, for brevity in classification. The temporal category will be addressed in the subsequent section (b.).

2.2.a.) Spatial Parameters (Layout and Readability)

Spatial parameters encompass those factors that will impact the layout and legibility of the surtitles, and while Gambier (2009) details some variables (font type, font size, text length and position), Karamitroglou (1998) details a more comprehensive list of spatial parameters in his *Guidelines for Production and Layout of TV Subtitles* which include: 1.) position on the screen, 2.) number of lines, 3.) text positioning, 4.) number of characters per line, 5.) typeface and distribution and 6.) font colour and background. While these guidelines are specific to subtitling, they nevertheless serve as a suitable outline of the spatial parameters related to surtitles. It should be noted that Oncins (2013b) has published an article regarding the technical aspects of surtitles using Bartoll's (2004) parameters (optionality, broadcast, colour, mobility, localization, placing, filing and typography), which are primarily attributed to subtitling. Although there is an overlap between Bartoll's and Karamitroglou's parameters, there existing but a nuance of terminology, Karamitroglou's prove to be more comprehensive and applicable to the context of subtitling.

Karamitroglou defines four categories of parameters in his guidelines, including 1.) spatial parameter/layout, 2.) temporal parameter/duration, 3.) punctuation and letter case, and 4.) target text editing. The first and second categories are equivalent to Gambier's "space-time characteristics", while the last two are equivalent to Gambier's "textual parameters" and "paratextual features" which, like Gambier's second and third categories for technical aspects (*textual parameters* and *paratextual features*), have also been grouped into the spatial parameter.

Karamitroglou's *Guidelines* are designed "to provide maximum appreciation and comprehension" of subtitled films and to "maximiz[e] the legibility and readability" of subtitles (n.p.). Readability and legibility are both essential for the overall reception of surtitles. Within the context of surtitling, Griesel emphasizes that readability is "the first most important criterion" (p.59) and as such, the effectiveness and the quality of the surtitles are dependent on readability (Moran, 2012, p.184). Perego & Ghia (2011) define readability as "the ease of reading as determined by the organization of information units and by typographic design as a whole" or "the degree at which printed information on screen is unambiguous on the basis of language fluency, content and meaning, quantity of text delivered, and message communicated" (p.178). In this sense, readability determines how easy it is to understand the surtitles. In other words, the readability of the surtitles will determine the clarity of the message delivered to the audience.

Readability relates primarily to textual parameters and paratextual features, as well as temporal parameters, whereas legibility, defined as "the ease with which a person manages to identify characters or letters" (p.178) is linked primarily to the spatial/layout parameters. Readability and legibility are concepts which both apply to surtitles as well. While legibility is generally easy to attain, Perego & Ghia (2011) underscore that securing readability "is a far more difficult task" because "reading ease can result from the combination of content delivered, style used, and design or text structure chosen" (p.178) and also because different viewers will have different reading levels and abilities.

For the context of surtitling, two necessary additional categories should be added to Karamitroglou's variables. Below is a listing, using Karamitroglou's variables as a framework, of the existing research with regards to the technical aspects of surtitles related to the spatial parameter and layout. Along with the two additional categories (*in italics*), these variables have been reorganized as follows: 1.) *screen positioning*, 2.) text positioning, 3.) font colour and background, 4.) typeface and distribution, 5.) number of lines, 6.) number of characters per line, 7.) textual features and punctuation, and 8.) *blank titles*:

With regards to the question of **screen positioning**, surtitles can be displayed either above or beneath the proscenium onto a rectangular screen (Mateo, 2003, p. 170), on the side or sides of the stage, on the backs of the seats or even via smartphones (Oncins, 2013b, p.4-10). While many opera houses make use of screens on the backs of seats, in the context of theatre surtitles, the current most common placement of the screen is above the stage, although the surtitles can

be integrated directly into the stage set, or even projected onto walls in certain cases. The use of smartphones for broadcasting surtitles (or rather, subtitles) live with theatre performances is a new technique that is currently being used by some theatre companies¹¹. Again, more often than not, the position of the screen “seems to be decided by the technical facilities available and the considerations of the stage director rather than [...] by audience needs” (Oncins, 2013a, p.50). As for the screen size, Bataillon et al. (2016) provide a brief explanation of how to gauge and calculate the screen size and dimensions; this is the only publication that addresses this topic, as far as I have found. As we recall from Chapter 1, Section 1.2, user satisfaction of screen positioning is currently unknown.

The **text positioning** refers obviously to the positioning of the text on the surtitle screen. Some researchers state that the text should be centered (Mateo, 2007a, p.177; Bataillon, Muhleisen & Diez, 2016, p.24), however Oncins has observed that the surtitles in some opera houses are also left aligned (2013a, p.57). There is currently no standardized practice; the final decision of the text positioning on the screen remains that of the company for which the surtitles are being created (Bataillon et al., p.24). Bataillon et al. consider center alignment to be the best suited for ensuring better aesthetics and readability (p.24).

There are also no standardized conventions for formatting the **font colour and background colour** of the screen. While most often, these factors are chosen in consideration of “the aesthetic needs of the stage production, rather than in response to the needs of the audience” (Oncins, 2013a, p.58), the text of surtitles is typically monochrome (white) on a black (Oncins, 2013b, p.12-13; 2013a, p.58) or dark grey (Bataillon et al., p.23) background. However, the colour chosen is subject to the stage lighting of a particular production and depends on the client, and can also be red, yellow, amber or green (Bataillon et al., p.23; Oncins, 2013a, p.58; 2013b, p.12-13). However, this is more applicable to the context of opera surtitles as it is to the context of theatre surtitles. Bataillon et al. suggest that if the screen is black, then intensity of projector probably needs adjusting (p.36), as the brightness of the text is also a factor that affects readability. Text brightness, is a necessary factor to consider when evaluating the reception of surtitles, since the brightness of the text plays an important role in the legibility of the surtitles. Vervecken (2012a) addresses the issue of light pollution caused by the “interference from light or special effects, such as a stroboscope or smoke” (p.245) which often interferes with the

¹¹ For instance, *Cercle Molière* in Winnipeg.

projector and can render the text dim, or even illegible. This is the extent of the research on the font and background that exists with regards to this parameter.

There is also very little research which addresses the **typeface and distribution** of surtitles. In the context of subtitling, the understanding is that “readers are more familiar with proportional-width fonts” (Rayner, Slattery & Bélanger, 2010, p.835) and as such, according to Bataillon et al. (2016), one should choose a *sans-serif* font with proportional spacing, as this is preferable for reading short lines on a screen (p.25). Mateo (2007a) states that the font type chosen is usually Arial or Helvetica (p.177). These criteria are the same as those established in the field of subtitling (Karamitroglou, 1998). The only source that discusses the font size of surtitles is Bataillon et al., who claim the font size usually ranges between 17-22 points (p.25). The font and size should remain unchanged (Oncins, 2013b, p.13) and this extends to capitalization; Bataillon et al. suggest avoiding capitalizing one or more words, since this demands greater decoding time and effort on behalf of the audience (p.25).

As for the **number of lines**, the general convention among researchers is that surtitles generally consist of two lines per title (Griesel, 2007; Low, 2002; Mateo, 2003; Oncins, 2013b), which Mateo attributes principally to screen size limitations and the time-constraints linked to the projection of the surtitles (p.170). Griesel’s comparative study of surtitles revealed that from an analysis of eight theatre productions, two-line titles were the most prevalent with the concentration of two-line titles ranging from 64.7% to 100% (2007, p.164) of all titles. However, while two-line titles are the most common and perhaps, most suitable (Bataillon et al, p.24), the rule of avoiding three-lined titles, which is applied to the context of subtitling, does not apply to theatre surtitles (Griesel, 2007, p.165), which can consist of either one, two or even three-lines (Bataillon et al, p. 24; Dewolf, p.96; Griesel, 2007, p.152, Oncins, 2013b, p.12).

When it comes to the **number of characters per line**, again, there are no fixed conventions and there are conflicting parameters in the existing body of research on surtitles. Below is a chart indicating the discrepancies between sources with regards to the character count per line (including spaces and punctuation marks). Some researchers state that surtitles are limited to two lines, with anywhere from 32 to 40 characters per line, which would result in titles consisting of 64 to 80 characters in total, whereas others claim that surtitles can consist of up to three lines with anywhere from 35 to up to a maximum of 70 characters per line, which would

result in a total of anywhere up to 70 characters per title to up to 140 characters, which is nearly double the amount.

Source	Two lines maximum (# of characters per line)	Up to three lines (# of characters per line)
(Low, 2002, p.103)	Up to 32 characters	
(Burton, 2001, p.1 in: Oncins, 2013b, p.12)	Maximum of 35 characters ¹²	
(Mateo, 2007a, p.176-177)	Average of 35-40 characters	
(Dragnea, 2010, p. 70)	About 35 characters	
(Dewolf, p.96)		Average of 35 characters
(Oncins, 2013b, p.12)		Up to 40 characters
(Bataillon et al, p.23)		50 characters maximum; preferable to limit to 45
(Griesel, 2007, p.152) ¹³		Maximum 70 characters

Table 1: Character Count Per Line as Outlined in the Current Body of Research on Surtitles

Bataillon et al. suggest that while “some surtitlers recommend 30-40, [...] this contradicts the demand of reproducing the rhetorical structures of the source text spoken on stage” since surtitles demand that the translation stick more closely to what the actor says on stage much more than in conventional drama translation (p.23-24).

Mateo’s (2007a) comparison of the surtitling norms of four opera houses shows that the number of characters per title can vary depending on venue and the producer. For instance, the number of characters (including spaces and punctuation) per line for the Royal Opera House’s surtitles ranged from as little as 12 to 35 characters maximum, the Canadian Opera Company’s surtitles ranged from of 38 to 58 characters per line, those produced by Christopher Bergen ranged from 26 to 63, while Aria Nuova’s ranged from 38 to up to 72 characters per line (p.176). Griesel’s (2007) analysis of the surtitles for eight theatre productions outlines the following ranges of average character counts per line for one-, two-, and three-line titles:

¹² Oncins explains that this varies according to the type of font used.

¹³ Interview with Pierre-Yves Diez from *Festival d’Avignon* in 2004

Number of Lines	Range of Average Character Count Per Surtitle	Number of Theatre Productions (Total of 8 analyzed)
One-line surtitle	24-45	7
Two-line surtitle	40-76	8
Three-line surtitle	58	1

Table 2: Calculation of Average Character Counts Based on Griesel’s (2007) Data

While some might privilege less characters per line and therefore, shorter surtitles, less characters will nevertheless result “in a larger number of titles, which [...] means that the audience will have to look at the screen more frequently” (Mateo, 2007a, p. 176). Griesel notes that having longer surtitles (more than one line) can minimize the annoying necessity of looking up at the screen (2007, p.165) and this can also help maximize the audience’s ability to concentrate on the performance. This statement stems from the notion that recipients can read surtitles with more than one line faster than surtitles consisting of only one-line, which is based off of studies regarding subtitles which have revealed that “viewers need comparatively more time to read short subtitles” (Ivarsson & Carroll, 1998, p.64). As Gottlieb suggests: “(fewer) larger subtitle blocks are read faster than (more) smaller ones” (2012, p.67). The results of this study, should provide some indications as to what the appropriate character counts may be for surtitles, coordinated with appropriate display times.

Textual features and punctuation play a role in ensuring the readability of surtitles. Recall that Gambier’s (2009) textual parameters include *lexical density*, *syntactic complexity*, *semantic coherence* and *text segmentation* (p.23). These parameters are equally applicable to surtitling.

As regards *lexical density*, the general translation strategy used when creating surtitles is *condensation (reduction, principle of economy)* due to constraints of space and time, as has been briefly discussed in Chapter 1, Section 1.4. The need for condensing the translated target text is founded upon the assumption within the field of subtitling that “fewer characters entail less time required to read” (Moran, 2012, p.209), even though “[i]t is strange that the presentation time of subtitles should be determined by the number of characters, [...] since] research on reading [...] has shown that words are not read letter by letter, and that some words, like articles, are mostly not fixated at all” (D’Ydewalle & Gielen, 1992, p.416). Surtitles for theatre generally undergo significantly more reduction when compared to film subtitles (Griesel, 2007, p.174-175; Low, 2002, p.103) and the degree of reduction is influenced by different factors such as onerous dialog,

the length of text to manage within a specific frame of time, rapid speech and the monolog/dialog structure of the text (Griesel, 2007, p.176).

There is no standard to the degree of abridgment of surtitles (Mateo, 2007a, p.174). According to Bataillon et al., the target texts for subtitled performances result in a reduction of up to 20% of the ST (p.21), while Griesel states that surtitles are shortened by one third as a rule (2009, p.124) and can be abridged up to 50% (2005, p.71) and Dragnea proposes that surtitles can be abridged by up to 70% (2010, p.62). This is a very large discrepancy. Condensing the ST by 50% or more “leads either to a great loss of information or to grave stylistic changes” (Griesel 2005, p.71). Dragnea (2010) calls attention to the fact that when the TT is reduced so significantly, it is no longer a faithful rendition of the ST on stage and this researcher questions the value of the final subtitled product when the TT is so heavily abridged (p.62). While there is no standard to the degree of reduction, the degree to which the surtitles will be condensed will vary considerably according to the qualities of each individual play and the needs of the target audience.

Mateo’s study on opera surtitles (2007a) has revealed that different opera houses have differing approaches to subtitling that are contingent upon an opera house’s in-house subtitling conventions and the technical constraints of surtitles related to comprehension, economy (otherwise known as ‘condensation’), clarity, transparency, distribution, synchronization, respect for grammar and meaning, as well as exposure time (p.174). This study revealed that some opera houses privilege content over form, which involves a strategy of significant reduction and privileges the communicative aspect, whereas others deem both content and form as integral to the internal coherence of a performance (p.176), privileging the intricacies of the dialogue and performance over a purely communicative function.

While the general tendency is to condense AVT genres such as subtitles and surtitles, an approach which contradicts the current convention of TT condensation is the principle of lexical access (Moran, 2012, p. 198). Moran’s study results “potentially refut[e] the theory that number of characters determines reading time” (p.209), and suggest that high lexical cohesion facilitates subtitle reading and reduces reading time. Titles “containing more cohesive devices may be easier to process because of their linguistic coherence as well as their cohesiveness with the [ST]” (*ibid*). According to Moran, “reading is based on linguistic variables *and* low-level lexical variables (such as word length and shape)” (*ibid*). Since these types of subtitles result in more characters, this study “weaken[s] the authority of the currently practiced 6–second rule which assumes a

connection between character count and reading speed/difficulty” (p.215). Further discussion about the 6-second rule for exposure time is detailed in section b.). Other studies which contradict the convention of condensation have been touched upon in Chapter 1, Section 1.3 (*Language Learning Potentials of Surtitles*). The concept of literal transfer, where the TT adheres to the ST as much as possible in both lexical and syntactic terms (Gottlieb, 1992; Ghia, 2012; Pavesi & Perego 2007, 2008), is a strategy which resembles that of lexical access. These studies lend support to the hypothesis supported in this present study regarding the translation strategy of “condensed-direct” translation (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4 and Chapter 2, Section 2.3). If certain subtitling studies have demonstrated that larger blocks of text are read faster than one-line titles and that the lexical density of the titles does not have as much of a bearing upon reading as previously thought, perhaps longer surtitles may not cause as much of a hindrance to the reading/viewing process as we think, meaning that condensation may not be as necessary as thought.

The conventional criteria for the *syntactic complexity and semantic coherence* of surtitles can be summarized as follows: In order to ensure readability, surtitles “should be easily perceivable and should therefore have simple sentence structures and a clear structure” (Griesel, 2009, p.124).

Dragnea (2010) explains in detail possible solutions for reducing the text which include 1.) eliminating tautologies, redundancies, repetitions when the sense can be conveyed by one word or expression (p.86-90), 2.) omitting proper names as long as it does not sow confusion (p.91), 3.) using active constructions instead of passive (p.93) and 4.) simplification of complex expressions/recurring phrases (p.95-100). Ivarsson and Carroll (1998) also provide a detailed outline of strategies for text reduction for the context of subtitling that are applicable to subtitling (omission, paraphrase, ellipsis, merging of short dialogues, simplification of syntax and vocabulary) (p.86-93) and also provide useful, detailed guidelines for punctuation that are equally applicable to surtitles. Karamitroglou (1998) also provides useful guidelines for punctuation and target text editing which are applicable to surtitles. Bataillon et al. (2016) also provide a useful, however brief, guide for punctuation and text editing of surtitles, and Griesel outlines methods for text reduction (2007, p.176). These rich and comprehensive resources are good references; there is no need to explain existing guidelines with regards to punctuation in this present study, as they are outlined in these references.

The last, extremely important aspect for ensuring readability is **text segmentation**. With regard to layout and line segmentation, the presentation of surtitles, much like with subtitles, “should be as unobstructive as possible from both an aesthetic and cognitive point of view” (Perego & Ghia, 2011, p.185). Along with the location of the text on screen and the presentation and alignment of the lines, line segmentation not only fulfills “aesthetic and geometric criteria”, text distribution and the division of titles are considered central to minimizing their intrusion on the reception process as well as reducing the audience’s cognitive load (*ibid*, p. 186; Karamitroglou, 1998). As Gottlieb (2012) explains within the context of subtitling, “[r]eader-friendly segmentation, including effective line breaks, allows for more positive intersemiotic feedback and may result in higher reading speeds. In other words, well-designed subtitles mean less condensation—and minimal loss of information” (p.69-70). Again, within the context of subtitling, Perego and Ghia (2011) note that “coherent line segmentation is also considered desirable whenever subtitles are exploited for second language learning purposes, or when the original is very hard to follow, for instance, when information density is high, speech rate fast, the quantity of culture-bound items is large, and information conveyed by speech is not redundant with information conveyed by visuals” (Perego & Ghia, 2011, p.186-187).

There are three types of segmentation, as defined by Reid (1990, p.100 in Gottlieb, 1994, p.109), the first of which is *grammatical segmentation* which entails cohesive segmentation of semantic units of the dialog reflected in the TT. Within the field of subtitling, the understanding is that “semantically motivated line breaks enhance reading speed” (Gottlieb, 1994, p.109). Moran (2012) suggests that “the goal of reduced reading time can be achieved by examining which structures and lexical decisions will entail the easiest lexical access, thereby reducing cognitive effort” (p.184). Just as with subtitles, creating syntactically complex structures and including too much information can have a negative impact on the perception of the surtitles (p.193). As mentioned in Chapter 1, Section 1.4, there is consensus in the field about the need to be unobstructive in style, to use simple structures and to be brief (Oncins, 2013b, p.12).

Rhetorical segmentation means that the TT follows the rhythm of speech. Dragnea (2010) provides a useful and detailed chapter concerning the segmentation of surtitles (p.70-84). Rhetorical segmentation can be considered both a spatial parameter having to do with how the speech is divided in textual form on the titles, as well as a temporal parameter, as this type of segmentation is also influenced by the synchronization of the displayed titles with the dialogue.

The last type of segmentation is *visual segmentation*, and is not a spatial parameter, but rather a temporal one, since in the context of surtitles, this type of segmentation is entirely dependent on the synchronization of the surtitle text displayed on screen at the same time as the dialogue spoken on stage. Visual and rhetorical segmentation go hand in hand.

In addition to the technical aspects covered thus far, the last important factor to consider for ensuring readability and for minimizing the audiences' distraction from the performance on stage are **blank titles**. While it is true that “[m]any surtitlers [...] insert a blank title between titles, particularly when it takes less time to read a particular caption” and that “[a]udiences normally welcome the relief of a little time with no text so that they may concentrate on the stage” (Mateo, 2007a, p.177), some practitioners do not insert a blank slide. Bataillon et al. state in their guide for theatre surtitling that blank titles are necessary (p.31). Without them, the surtitles are displayed even when there is no one speaking on stage. Displaying the surtitles for too long can lead to re-reading of the surtitles (Griesel, 2007, p.166) and also distracts attention from the action on stage. In contrast, displaying the surtitles one after the other with no pause also causes a hindrance to the audience, as it makes more difficult to notice when a title has changed (p.167). In the context of subtitling, Ivarsson and Carroll (1998) have noted that “[e]xperience has shown that if subtitles are placed back to back without a minimal pause between them, the eye often does not register that a new subtitle had appeared” (p.68) (see following section b.). This is even more important to consider for viewers of a live surtitled stage production, due to the distance that the audiences' eyes have to travel between the stage and the screen located above the stage, which could “resul[t] in a slightly longer reaction time to change attention from the stage to the screen” (Griesel, 2007, p.152-153; p.163). At least when there is a blank (or a *Black*, as Griesel refers to them) inserted between titles, there will always be a short break between them. Blanks also allow for better synchronization between the surtitles and the dialogue spoken on stage, which leads us to the temporal parameters of the surtitles.

2.2.b.) Temporal Parameters (Duration)

Karamitroglou's (1998) temporal parameters are divided into six categories including the exposure time of one- and two-line subtitles, and single-word subtitles, lead-in and lead-out times, and lag time between two consecutive subtitles. Below are the minimum and maximum duration

times for one-word, one-line and two-line titles. Karamitroglou,1998; Ivarsson & Carroll, 1998, p.64-65) have differing and less specific parameters, which appear in italics:

Number of Lines	Minimum Duration	Maximum Duration
One-Word <i>"Very Short Subtitle"</i>	-1.5 secs. <i>-1.5 secs.</i>	-no more than 1.5 secs. <i>-no more than 6 secs.</i>
One-Line (7-8 words) <i>"One and a half lines"</i>	-3.5 secs. <i>-4 secs.</i>	-no more than 3.5 secs. <i>-no more than 6 secs.</i>
Two-Lines (14-16 words) <i>"Full Two-Liner"</i>	-6 secs. <i>-3 secs.</i>	-no more than 6 secs. <i>-no more than 6 secs.</i>

Table 3: Karamitroglou (1998) and Ivarsson & Carroll’s (1998) Minimum/Maximum Exposure Times

As for *leading-in time*, Karamitroglou specifies that the titles should be displayed on the screen 1/4 of a second after the beginning of speech, “since tests have indicated that the brain needs 1/4 of a second to process the advent of spoken linguistic material and guide the eye towards the [subtitled text]” (n.p.). As regards *leading-out time*, Karamitroglou’s guidelines indicate that the titles should be displayed for no more than two seconds after the end of the utterance. Additionally, there should be about 1/4 of a second of *lag time between two consecutive titles*, as touched upon in the ‘blank titles’ section (Ivarsson & Carroll, 1998, p.64), as this is necessary “to signal to the brain the disappearance of one [title] as a piece of linguistic information, and the appearance of another” (Karamitroglou, 1998, n.p.). However, Griesel supposes that because of the distance between the seated audience, stage and screen is significantly greater in theatre than is the distance between the image on the screen and the subtitles for film or television, this demands longer transition times between surtitles (2007, p.152-154, p.163, p.166, p.167).

As mentioned in Chapter 1, Section 1.2, the minimum and maximum display times of surtitles remain unestablished and untested on audiences (Griesel, 2005, p.10). However, the subtitling rules outlined above do not apply to theatre surtitling (Griesel, 2007). According to Griesel’s research on surtitles, there are no specified minimum display times, although surtitles seem to intuitively last for at least 2 to 3 seconds (2005.p.71, 2007, p. 167). There are also no established maximum display times, which “naturally renders reception far more difficult, sometimes even preventing it, or forces the audience to decide for or against one or more theatrical or translatory signs” (Griesel, 2005, p.71). According to Griesel’s data (2007, p.154-162), it can

be noted that the duration of surtitle can vary significantly (1-20 seconds), whereas the time a subtitle is displayed on the screen is always limited to 6 seconds (as discussed below). Mateo's (2007a) analysis of Aria Nuova's average display time shows that these surtitles ranged from 5.5 seconds to 16 seconds in total (p.177). In Griesel's analysis of video-recordings of six productions, the average display time was measured to be between 4.1 and 6.3 seconds and on average, titles stayed on screen for 5.6 seconds (Griesel, 2007, p.163).

While the standard presentation time of subtitles is regulated by the 6-second rule which dictates that "a subtitle of two lines [...] with a total of 64 characters and spaces (which equals the maximum number allowed) is shown for 6 seconds", even though "no one seems to know why" (D'Ydewalle & Gielen, 1992, p.416), Griesel notes that this rule does not apply to surtitles, as many of them will be displayed for twice as long or even longer (2007, p.176-177). I would argue that it is not possible to establish fixed and definitive display times for surtitles, since surtitles will always be regulated by the speed of speech delivered on stage and this can vary from one performance to the next. As Vervecken (2012a) states, "the rhythm and pace is never exactly the same and may change significantly with each performance. A surtitler needs to take this into account while segmenting, translating and, especially, cueing" (p.239) and should consider the audience's reading time (Griesel, 2007, p.166) because if a spectator cannot process the surtitle during its exposure time, this renders the content and quality of the translation irrelevant (see Moran, 2012, p.184, *with reference to subtitles*).

The average reading speed ranges between 150-180 words per minute (wpm) and the established subtitling norm is two-lines of text with 80 characters of text displayed around 5 1/3 seconds resulting in a reading speed of around 175wpm (Ivarsson & Carroll, 1998, p.67). However, as mentioned in section 2.2.a., there are several other elements that can have an impact on reading behaviour, such as the audience's literacy level, their familiarity with the ST language and the genre of the performance, which can make it "very difficult to make hard and fast rules about reading time" (p.65, *with reference to subtitles*). Moran suggests that

[s]ince it is possible to accustom viewers to a specific reading rhythm, the amount of text audiences are expected to read in a specific time should be as consistent as possible within any one film or production. Provided the reading rhythm of the subtitles is reasonably constant, viewers will adapt their reading speed within limits (2012, p.69).

With regards to surtitles, Dewolf (2003) echoes this remark, specifying that the rhythm of the surtitles must be coherent with the play and the frequency of the surtitles should be regular.

Nevertheless, the live nature of surtitles means that although the surtitles may have been well-segmented with rehearsals, “[a] dramatic increase in pace” or even omitted lines, “might cause the surtitles to disappear before the audience has been able to read them” (Vervecken, 2012a, p.242). However, these factors are not the only technical elements which will determine the audience’s ability to read the surtitles. In the field of subtitling, the assumption is that “reading speed is influenced by the manner in which the text is presented but also by the quantity and complexity of the information that is conveyed, and by the action on screen at a given moment” (Perego & Ghia, 2011, p.185). This may be applicable to surtitles as well. The amount of action on stage, the complexity and speed of the dialogue in the ST and in the TT (complex storyline/subject matter, number of actors/speakers on stage), and visual elements such as the complexity of set design (projections, moving scenery, etc.), are elements which may add to the audience’s cognitive load and affect the reading process, according to the amount of visual and auditory stimuli at any given moment during a theatre performance.

The results of this study should help shape a general framework for adequate display times of surtitles and provide insight into how easy or difficult it is for audience members to absorb the surtitles while appreciating the performance on stage.

2.3.) The Impact of Translation Strategies on Differing Audience Types

In his proposed variables for measuring audience reception, Gambier (2009) proposes correlating technical variables with sociological variables as well as audiovisual variables. This section deals with the sociological dimension of the reception of surtitles. Significant research has been carried out within the domains of subtitling and surtitling which explores the relationship between the ST and TT and the impact that translation strategies have on differing audience types.

Gottlieb (2012) ascertains that depending on the audience types and the mode of translation, AVT media can function in four ways and that each of these functions “trigger[s] a specific *perception mode*” (p.46). In the case of surtitles, two of these functions apply. Depending on the audience types, surtitles function in the following two manners: either as a *text substitute* for audience members who 1.) have a linguistic impairment (i.e. no knowledge of the SL) or have a sensory impairment (i.e. deaf or hard of hearing) or, 2.) in the case of audience members who

understand both the SL and the TL, the surtitles function as a *cognitive supplement* (2005, p. 37; 2012, p. 46-47). Gottlieb explains that the latter type of audience members uses subtitles in the following ways, and often, interchangeably: They may use them to facilitate their understanding of the ST and simultaneously to compare the ST to evaluate or criticize the TT (2005, p. 38; 2012, p.46). This pertains to surtitles as well. Gottlieb’s functional categories for AVT products can thus be directly applied to Griesel’s audience model for surtitles. Below is an adapted version of Griesel’s audience model (2005, p.67; 2009, p.122) which incorporates Gottlieb’s categories:

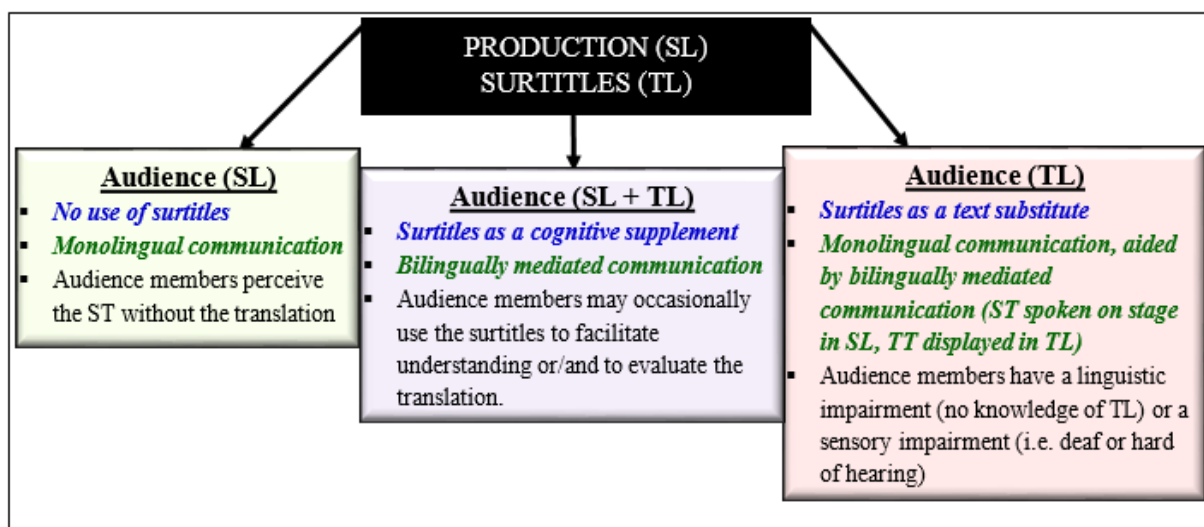


Figure 5: Griesel’s Audience Model with Gottlieb’s Functional Categories for AVT Products

In the case of interlingual surtitles, the source text, which is the performance, is perceived differently according to the audiences’ language abilities. Griesel delineates the differing perceptual modes in the following manner, and when applied to Canada’s Francophone minority theatre contexts, each mode is attributed to the following types of audience members, who will perceive the subtitled performance “either as a source text without translation” (*Francophones who do not make use of the surtitles*); “with occasional reception of the translation” (*Francophone bilinguals; Anglophones with knowledge of French; French language learners*); “or as a complete target text, of which the target language segment is the integral component” (*monolingual Anglophones with little to no French background; those who speak English and a first language (L1) other than French; the deaf and hard of hearing*). According to Griesel’s three audience types, “communication is monolingual” for those who do not use the surtitles; “monolingual, aided by bilingually mediated communication” for those who have little to no knowledge of the

SL; and “bilingually mediated” for those who know both the SL and TL (2005, p.67). In Canada’s Francophone minority theatre contexts, a number of non-empirically tested suppositions regarding the audiences’ reactions to the surtitles have been stated by Ladouceur (*forthcoming*, p.16) and Liss (2012, p.29-30) which fall within the confines of Gottlieb’s and Griesel’s perception modes according to the different audience types. In the case of Francophone audience members, the surtitles are reported to either be used for clarification – especially of expressions and accents, since the French-language performances are usually delivered in a vernacular language – and are also perceived as a source of distraction, because there is a tendency on behalf of these audience members to compare the auditory (ST) and visual (TT) messages. While some Francophone audience members may understand that the surtitles serve a valuable cause and thus view the surtitles as tolerable, other Francophones are in complete opposition to the English surtitles for language-political reasons (Ladouceur, *forthcoming* p.16, Ladouceur, 2013c). The use of surtitles for Francophiles and French-language learners outlined by Liss are discussed in the next section. Of course, the surtitles are a necessity for the Anglophone spectators who benefit from the ability to understand and appreciate a French-language theatre performance.

Griesel (2007; 2009) underscores that the surtitles are a necessity for those who do not understand the source language on stage, and highlights that it is important to consider the diversity of the audience (p.19-20; p.122). Additionally, Griesel (2005) emphasizes that “these three modes of communication must occur parallel to each other” and in an overt fashion (p.67), because the TT coexists with the ST performed on stage. There are several publications with regards to subtitles that highlight the oppositional methods of *covert* and *overt* translation. These terms were adapted for research on subtitling from House’s (1977) *Model for Assessing Translation Quality*. House suggests that the manner in which functional equivalence is achieved depends on these two types of translation. An *overt* translation is used when the ST is “a piece of work with a certain status in the source language community which has to remain as *intact* as possible given the process of transference into another language” (p.107; 2015, p.54). This type of translation strategy is one in which the cultural transfer deviates from the target culture norms and which is “interspersed with foreign elements from the original”, allowing the reader (in the traditional sense of translation) to “appreciate the original’s function, albeit at a lingua-cultural distance” (2010, p.245, 2015, p.67). On the opposite side of the spectrum, a *covert* translation is one which is “not tied to the source and target language addressees” and which functions as an

original ST in the target culture. This mode of translation achieves functional equivalence because the TT is based on the “equivalent needs of a comparable audience in the source language and target language communities” (1997, p.107). This type of strategy results in a translation that is culturally distanced from the source language insofar that it is adapted to the cultural context of the TA (2010, p.246). Gambier (2003) notes that with AVT products “fidelity is subordinated to the communicative needs of an audience” (p.185) and highlights that in the case of screen translation, there is a tendency to domesticate or naturalize the source text – manipulating and assimilating the product in order to conform to the target audiences’ dominant preferences and expectations (2004, p.9), or in other words, the norms of the target culture. Translated AVT products are, as in the case of literature, often subject to marketing forces that influence the translation strategies employed. Hence this is why the overall translation strategy used in AVT has been termed *tradaptation* (p.5).

There are some modes of AVT which allow for a greater degree of cultural adaptability than others. For instance, there is a greater degree of flexibility for using *covert* strategies in the context of dubbing, where the SL replaces the TL altogether. However, in the case of intralingual subtitling, with which theatre surtitles have much in common, the limits of domestication are imposed by the original dialogue, which is why Gottlieb (2004, p.90; 2010, p.102) asserts that subtitling is *overt* in the sense that the source text is visible on the screen as well as audible, and regarding the fact that the target language does not have the capacity to usurp and domesticate the source text, but must surrender to it to an appropriate degree (p.9). The case is the same in the context of surtitles – the target text cohabitates with the source text on stage. Furthermore, like other modes of AVT, surtitles are “characterised by a strong visual and contextual embeddedness” (Ramière, 2006, p.156) and are also “subject to specific constraints of faithfulness and economy” (Mateo, 2007a, p.119) that differ from conventional translation. Ladouceur’s research on surtitles addresses these constraints, emphasizing that while the ST is often treated quite liberally in the case of traditional theatre translation, and is usually adapted to the TL context in order to facilitate the accessibility and reception of the TA, whereas in the case of theatre surtitling, discrepancies between the visual and auditory information (the performance) should not conflict with the textual information displayed in the surtitles which are embedded within the ST cultural context (2013a, p.119; 2013c, p.352). As Gottlieb (2012) highlights, with reference to the context of subtitling, “in order not to alienate audiences, most subtitlers do their utmost to avoid clashes between the

original audible dialogue and their choice of words in the subtitles. But whenever the foreign dialogue presents localisms, whether *intra-* or *extralinguistic* culture-related lexical items [...] subtitlers find themselves in a dilemma, especially when working from a minor into a major language” (p.48). Particularly relevant to the Canadian Francophone minority context, the task of the surtitled is thus to “preserve the integrality of the original performance” (2013a, p.119). Since surtitles are a multisemiotic product (Mateo, 2007a, p.135-136) that forms an integral whole, what might be deemed “‘acceptable’ semantic or semiotic changes” in the target culture may actually “betray the text” (Gottlieb, 2005, p.47). Gottlieb confirms that in the case of multidimensional AVT like subtitles and surtitles, making such changes and adapting the text “may lead to major distortions of the original content and form” (p.48). Within the context of subtitling, Gottlieb (2012) has discussed how there is debate between experts and practitioners regarding the “desirability of emulating, or even calquing the words and syntax of the original dialogue”, yet there is nevertheless “a common understanding that in interlingual subtitling, the distinction between productions in languages unknown to the target audience and those in better-known languages [...] matters to audiences” (p.47). This is why, when subtitling for audiences who may have sufficient knowledge of the SL, “the dialogue should be represented as verbatim as the time and other constraints allow” (p.51).

Prior to Gottlieb, Ivarsson and Carroll (1998) also ascertained that in order to reduce the disturbance caused to the audience members who understand the SL, “the translation should not be abridged more than necessary and the subtitles should run as long as time allows while still adhering to an established reading rhythm” (p.74). These researchers also state that the translation should, within reasonable limits, “keep as close as possible to the sequence and structure of the original” (p.74).

In connection with Pavesi and Perego’s (2008) concept of literal transfer discussed in Chapter 1, Section 1.5, Ghia (2012) conducted an eye-tracking study to test viewers’ eye movements between the image and subtitles in literal and non-literal translation forms and provides evidence which demonstrates that discrepancies between the ST and TT lead to increased comparison of the ST and TT on behalf of viewers. The results of this study shed light upon the relevance of linguistic variables on the perception of AVT input (p.177). Ghia’s premise is based on the principle of cognitive mapping introduced by Karamitroglou (1998) and further developed by researchers such as Perego and Ghia (2011), among others (Zanón, 2011).

According to Karamitroglou, when linguistic terms are recognizable by the viewers of a subtitled AVT product, the viewers expect to see literally equivalent terms in the subtitles and this “occurs because of the constant presence of an inherently operating checking mechanism in the brain of the viewers which raises the suspicions that the translation of the original text is not “properly” or “correctly” rendered” when items are omitted or replaced with non-equivalent items (p.13). Ghia highlights that the comparison of the ST and TT “may operate in either an L2 – L1 direction, to check for comprehension of the foreign language input, or in an L1 – L2 direction” (P. 165-166). Additionally, Gottlieb (2012) explains that the need of avoiding discrepancies between the ST and TT presents a challenge to translation when faced with localisms and culture-related lexical items. The dilemma lies between “source-text fidelity” by transferring the cultural-bound items from the ST to the TT, and between “localizing” or “converting” these items to the target audience’s cultural context with the aim of ensuring “reader-friendliness” (p.48). This past research on subtitles corroborates with Ladouceur’s guidelines (Ladouceur, 2013c, p.358) for surtitling in minority and bilingual contexts, where source-text fidelity is favoured as well as necessary¹⁴.

The perspective assumed for this present study is that in a linguistic and cultural minority context, the cultural value of the ST should be exploited and transferred to the TT, especially given that the surtitles are not only meant to serve communicative function, but additionally to serve a function of cultural and linguistic preservation and promotion, as well as a pedagogical purpose. In the theatrical context, it is important to consider that the surtitles become embedded in an art form which is based on a social and communal experience (Aaltonen, 2000, p.53). Theatrical productions “addres[s] a group of people in a particular place and time [...] and gro[w] directly out of a society, its collective imagination[,] symbolic representations, and its system of ideas and values” (*Ibid*). Additionally, we must pay heed to the fact that a “theatre production is always closely tied to its audience” in a particular place at a particular point in time (p.58). With respect to the Francophone minority theatre contexts, this aspect is emphasized throughout Ladouceur’s corpus of research and addressed in Liss’ research on theatre surtitling in Francophone theatres of Western Canada (2012), as well as in Pridmore-Franz’ (2015) article on surtitling in Francophone minority contexts with particular focus on the surtitling strategy employed for the creation of the surtitles at *L’UniThéâtre* in Edmonton. In this publication, the

¹⁴ As addressed in Chapter 1, Section 1.4

researcher proposed the term “condensed-direct translation” to describe the translation strategy employed. While House’s descriptions of *overt* and *covert* translation were conceived of within a traditional translation framework and can be applied to the AVT context, the constraints of space and time that are imposed on this mode of translation add a dimension to the translation process which these definitions do not address. Even when applying a strategy of literal transfer, the spatiotemporal nature of surtitles imposes the need to reduce the TT at least to a certain degree. Omitting segments of the ST in the surtitles could lead to a loss of information and stylistic deformations and potentially irritate the Francophone audience members who would notice the discrepancies between the dialogue and the surtitles. A strategy to mediate between the goal of ensuring the transfer of the ST to the TT as well as the need to ensure the readability and usability of the surtitles is to minimally reduce the length of the surtitles by vigilantly dissecting parts of the text that will not distort the semantic threadwork of the ST, causing minimal discrepancies between the messages delivered aurally and visually. This can be done by omitting repetitions and paraphrasing or reformulating long segments of rapid dialogues. However, the main intention is to the direct transfer of the source text to the greatest extent possible. This includes preserving the cultural characteristics of the ST. For instance, proper names and swears with a cultural connotation should stay intact in the surtitles.¹⁵

The method of “condensed-direct translation” serves to balance the linguistic layers of the theatrical production and place both the French and English language on equal grounds (Pridmore-Franz, 2015, p.66). The similarities which exist between the linguistic traits of French and English facilitate the application of a direct translation strategy, but naturally, there are instances where transposition or equivalence are necessary to convey the correct ST intentions, in idiomatic and pragmatic terms. Idiomatic features of the French ST spoken on stage should not be rendered literally, but be replaced with the natural equivalent in the English surtitles (TT), otherwise there is a risk that the translation sounds unnatural in the TT and that would also be a cause for distraction to bilingual as well as unilingual Anglophone audience members.

¹⁵ For example, here is an excerpt from *La Corneille*:

ST: “A sacrait en français de France à tout bout de champ contre son mari. Bordel par-ci pis Putain par-là!

TT: “She was always swearing at her husband in France French. *Bordel* here, *putain* there.”

2.4.) Incidental Language Acquisition and AVT

There are but a few publications which address surtitles as a tool for learning a second language. Vervecken (2012a) notes that while surtitles are not necessarily designed for language learning purposes, they happen to be used by certain audience members for the purpose of language acquisition (p.252). This is true in the context of *L'UniThéâtre*, where several Junior High and High School groups (grades 7-12) from Francophone and French Immersion programs attend plays with English surtitles. With regard to the Canadian Francophone minority theatre contexts, Liss (2003) explains that for students who are learning French and who are not proficient enough to understand everything, it is important to be able to access the surtitles as a resource which does not affect the performance on stage, but allows them to follow along (p.30). Liss mentions furthermore that this is all the more important when a play is written in a vernacular language, since this register of language is rarely taught in school, making it more difficult for students who are not familiar with this type of language. Liss' position is that, by facilitating language learners' experience, surtitles are a means of promoting the French language (*ibid*). Interestingly, there are certain countries and regions such as Ireland and Wales, which "use subtitles as an effective means to teach, revive and maintain minority languages" (Ivarsson & Carroll, p. 7). In the Canadian Francophone minority contexts, the surtitles can be seen as serving such a function. This seems to be the extent of research on surtitles and language acquisition. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Section 1.5 (*Language Learning Potentials of Surtitles*), there are numerous studies which indicate that intra- and interlingual subtitling can promote incidental foreign language acquisition. It can therefore be assumed that the same applies to surtitles. In this section, only some of the most pertinent research on subtitles and language acquisition which relates to surtitles has been selected.

Surtitles, like subtitles, can fulfill the function of providing rich language input to language learners as an authentic and linguistically rich resource (Brandl, 2008, p.17), which is one of the principles of communicative language teaching: a commonly used approach to teaching second and foreign languages. According to this approach, in order to successfully learn a language, the learner must be involved in authentic communication. Of the eight principles of communicative language teaching, the fourth principle is that "input needs to be meaningful, comprehensible and elaborated" (Brandl, 2008, p.16), which is based on Krashen's (1985)

principle of meaningful and comprehensible input (Brandl, p.17, Zarei, 2009, p.71). Without the surtitles, the French-language performance would be incomprehensible to many French language learners, especially beginners, rendering the French cultural experience rather meaningless. Perego & Pavese (2007) underscore that “various types of audiovisual products may provide pragmatically diversified and highly contextualized input, thus offering foreign language learners experiences of language uses they would hardly have otherwise.” (p.148). As was mentioned previously, subtitled theatre performances provide the perfect opportunity to language learners to be immersed in a highly-contextualized cultural experience, hearing authentic accents and colloquial language.

Ivarsson and Carroll explain with regards to the instructive value of subtitles, that “when viewers see a translation into their own language of the foreign (or their own) language on the screen it consolidates over time their familiarity with the language, especially if they happen to have a working knowledge of it already” (p.35). Studies such as Bairstow and Lavour’s (2012) have indicated that beginner learners benefit most from interlingual subtitles. Certain studies have demonstrated that subtitles are useful for vocabulary acquisition (Gambier, 2007, p.103; Zarei, 2009, p.81), while others have shown that subtitles help learners improve their listening comprehension (Zanón, 2011, p.198).

Not only do subtitles (and thus, surtitles) serve as authentic and contextualized language input, the multimodal and intersemiotic nature (Gambier, 2007, p.98) of subtitles has also been shown to be cognitively beneficial and less taxing on language learners. According to Mayer’s (2003) cognitive theory of multimedia learning¹⁶ (in Zanón, 2011; Zarei, 2009, p.72) “individuals possess a limited capacity to pay attention to input when it comes from one channel only” (Zanón, p.199). The more channels (visual, aural, textual), the greater the possibilities of information processing, which facilitates the activation of previous knowledge and reduces an individual’s cognitive load (*ibid*). Additionally, Paivio’s (1991) dual-coding theory¹⁷ (in Zanón, 2011; Zarei, 2009, p.71) implies that the combination of visual and verbal information allows language learners to build “referential connections between those two forms of mental representation” resulting in them learning “more efficiently” (Zanón, p.200; Perego & Ghia, 2007, p. 192). Similarly, the theory of cognitive mapping (Karamitroglou, 1998; Perego & Ghia, 2011; Ghia,

¹⁶ Mayer, R. E. (2003), *Learning and Instruction*. New Jersey: Merrill/Prentice Hall

¹⁷ Paivio, A. (1991), *Dual Coding Theory: Retrospect and Current Status*. Canadian Journal of Psychology 45, 255–87.

2012) is based on the principle that, when exposed to multi-channel input such as subtitles, learners “tend to constantly perform a process of ST-TT mapping” (Perego & Ghia, 2011, p.190; Karamitroglou, 1998; Ghia, 2012). The extent of mapping between the ST and TT depends on the characteristics of the subtitles, as well as on the viewer’s linguistic proficiency in the L2, with “beginning learners tending to focus on isolated lexical items” while learners who are more advanced tending to “shift to more elaborate and critical processing at the syntactic and pragmatic level” (Perego & Ghia, 2011, p.190). The results of this study help provide some insight into the manners in which language learners with varying levels of French language proficiency make use of the subtitles, as this phenomenon is highly likely to occur with subtitles as well.

As was outlined in Chapter 1, section 1.5, certain studies have shown that literal transfer (Gottlieb, 1992; Pavesi & Perego, 2007; Pavesi & Perego, 2008; Ghia, 2012) is the best translation strategy for low proficiency learners, because it is psychologically and linguistically more supportive (Pavesi & Perego, 2007, p.163) and provides them with a more direct access to the foreign language (p.156). Recall that the hypothesis of this present study (section 1.4) is linked to the strategy of literal transfer. According to Perego & Pavesi’s (2007) study results, literal transfer may be the strategy that is best suited for less advanced language learners, however this type of strategy could be more distracting for more advanced viewers (p.163). It was also discussed in Chapter 1, section 1.5 that the strategy of literal transfer would result in lengthier subtitles. It is important then to be aware that visual information is “critical for low-proficiency students” and that it has been observed that “beginners rely on the subtitles for comprehension at the expense of visual information” (Lavour & Bairstow, 2011, p.460-461). Longer subtitles may thus not be beneficial to beginner language learners, whose attention to the visual information on stage might be compromised by reading the subtitles. The results of this study should help determine whether or not this is the case. Additionally, it is important to recognize that the change of focus required to read the subtitles and the split-attention effect (Ghia, 2012; Miquel-Iriarte et al, 2012; Mayer & Pilegard, 2014a, 2014b) are two major issues affecting reception and the demand on a viewer’s attention (Ghia, 2012, p.263), as well as upon language learning (Miquel-Iriarte et al., 2012, p.263) through a subtitled product. A split-attention effect is said to occur when viewers must divide their attention between multiple sources of information which are essential for understanding (Mayer, R., & Pilegard, C., 2014b, p. 206). Since the need to mentally integrate multiple sources of information (visual, textual, auditory) already increases the viewer’s cognitive

load (*ibid*, p. 2016), when “too much essential information is presented at too fast a rate [...] to adequately process” this can result in cognitive overload, which “occurs when the amount of essential cognitive processing required by the multimedia instructional message exceeds the learner’s cognitive capacity” (Mayer & Pilegard, 2014a, p.316-317). Longer surtitles, coupled with fast-paced dialogue, resulting in less reading time may not be ideal for language learning, since a “fast-paced presentation that requires a lot of mental model building may not allow enough time” for the learner to “engage in all of the cognitive processing needed for making sense of the presented material” (Mayer & Pilegard, 2014a, p.318). It will also be interesting to see whether or not the results of this study indicate that this occurred for certain language learners.

These aforementioned studies, and several additional studies on language learning and subtitling which have not been addressed in this research, can be directly applied to the context of surtitles. While there is much evidence that demonstrates the learning benefits of subtitles, similar studies remain to be conducted within the context of surtitles.

CHAPTER 3 – STUDY PROCEDURES

This study did not take place under controlled laboratory conditions. It was conducted in a live and public context in collaboration with *L'UniThéâtre* over the course of its 2014-2015 theatre season. The majority of the data for this study was collected via the participation of regular *L'UniThéâtre* patrons, as well as recruited participants, and members of the general public who attended one or all of the following three surtitled theatre productions which occurred on the following dates: *La Corneille*¹⁸- October 30th, November 1st, 5th, 7th and 9th, 2014; *Le destin tragique de Tubby et Nottubby*¹⁹- January 29th, 30th, 31st and February 1st, 2015; and *Jean et Béatrice*²⁰- March 25th-29th, April 1st-5th, 2015.

This chapter provides a detailed report of the participant recruitment, data-collection, and data-analysis methods used to investigate the topic at hand. Part A. addresses the manner in which participants were recruited and outlines the different groups of participants who took part in this study. Part B. details the data-collection methods chosen for the study and part C. outlines the data-analysis methods.

3.1.) Participants

According to the three dimensions being explored in this study – 1.) summary of the impact of surtitles on Francophone minority theatres; 2.) audience reactions to surtitles according to linguistic groups; 3.) language learning potentials of surtitles – different types of participants took part in this study.

In order to gain a better perspective as to the impact of surtitles on the Francophone theatres of Central and Western Canada, the Artistic and General Directors of the following theatre companies contributed by completing a questionnaire regarding the use of surtitles for their productions²¹: *Théâtre français de Toronto*, *La Troupe du jour*, *Le Cercle Molière*, *L'UniThéâtre* and *Théâtre la seizième*. The answers submitted by the Artistic and General Directors were used

¹⁸ By Lise Vaillancourt (2012)

¹⁹ By Sophie Brech and Louis Fortier (2013)

*This play will henceforth be cited as “*Tubby et Nottubby*”.

²⁰ By Carole Fréchette (2002)

²¹ See Section B.) *Surveys and Focus Group*

to provide a summary of the current surtitling situation in Western Canada and Ontario, which is included in Chapter 4, section A. It is not the Artistic Directors who are considered as a sample group in this case, but rather the theatres themselves. *Théâtre la catapulte* was not included in this survey since this theatre is situated in Ottawa, which is an officially bilingual city that does not necessarily fit into the same sociolinguistic and politico-cultural context as these other Francophone theatres. *Théâtre du Nouvel-Ontario*, located in Sudbury, Ontario, was non-intentionally excluded from the study by oversight.

There were some complexities to consider with regard to determining appropriate sample groups and sample sizes for this study; primarily, the fact that there is no existing information list regarding the linguistic background or general socio-demographic characteristics (age, education, etc.) of the population being studied (*L'UniThéâtre's* audience members/regular patrons). The unavailability of this information made it impossible to select a sample based on random selection (probability sampling) and to re-create a proportionally representative sample that mirrors the characteristics of the population being studied (Gobo, 2004, p.409-410). Furthermore, probability sampling is actually not-well suited for studies in the social sciences, since societies are *not* random and “because not every person has the same relevance in society” (p.411). In other words, society and individuals are non-homogenous. As Gobo states: “statistical inference in social studies is quite problematic” (p.421) and “representativeness is often a practical matter [...] because in social research we look at the social significance of samples instead of a statistical logic” (p.406). For this reason, non-probability sampling was used and the samples were intended to provide a representation of the population of study with regard to the characteristics that are intrinsic to the study objective and hypothesis.

In order to determine the types of participants and the appropriate sample size needed to meet the main objectives and test the hypothesis of this study regarding the translation strategy chosen and the reactions to the surtitles based on different linguistic groups, a number of factors were taken into consideration. Firstly, since the aim of this study is to obtain more insight into how *L'UniThéâtre's* linguistically diverse audience makes use of and perceives the surtitles, it was necessary to ensure a certain number of responses from *L'UniThéâtre's* subscribers and from general patrons attending the plays during the 2014-2015 theatre season. Furthermore, since the object of this study is to explore audience preferences and needs in a natural setting (i.e. public surtitled theatre performances at *L'UniThéâtre*), it was deemed important to collect a certain

amount of responses from participants who were not pre-recruited for the study in order to ensure that at least a certain amount of participant responses represented *L'UniThéâtre's* natural audience. Pre-recruiting members from *L'UniThéâtre's* base of theatre subscribers was also not feasible. Additionally, the responses from *L'UniThéâtre's* regular patrons needed to include members from all three linguistic groups: Francophone, Anglophone and bilingual. Secondly, in order to explore the language learning potentials of surtitles, it was also important to ensure participation from French-language learners.

In order to serve these needs, the samples for this study were divided into three groups of non-recruited and pre-recruited participants (Group 1, Group 2 and Group 3). These three groups were divided in terms of their types, purposes, characteristics, sample sizes, as well as the sampling methods used, in the following ways:

TYPE	GROUP 1	GROUP 2	GROUP 3
	“Natural population”	“French language students”	“Replicated / comparison group” (fixed group of participants)
PURPOSE	-To survey <i>L’UniThéâtre’s</i> theatre subscribers and general patrons who attended one or all of the three subtitled performances.	-To ensure a minimum of responses from French language students on the language learning potentials of subtitles.	-To attempt to replicate <i>L’UniThéâtre’s</i> audience according to linguistic profiles: 1.) to ensure a minimum participation in the study; 2.) to ensure that some Anglophones are participating in the study, since the amount of monolingual Anglophones that regularly attend performances at <i>L’UniThéâtre</i> is unknown; 3.) to have a group of participants who attend all three performances in order to compare the results from all three performances.
CHARACTERISTICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Audience members (<i>L’UniThéâtre</i> subscribers and members of the public) - Francophone bilinguals and Anglophones with varying degrees of French knowledge. - Unknown proportion of varying sociolinguistic backgrounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Pre-recruited University of Alberta / Campus Saint-Jean students enrolled in a university French class - Varying degrees of fluency and knowledge of the French language and culture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Pre-recruited participants - Canadian and non-Canadian bilingual Francophones with varying degrees of fluency and knowledge of the French language and culture - Monolingual Anglophones
PROJECTED SAMPLE SIZE	-20% of the average past attendance rates (<i>L’UniThéâtre’s</i> 2011-2012 / 2012-2013 seasons) Targeted amount: minimum 10 participants per performance (or minimum 20% of attendance rates for current performances if the attendance rates are lower than the 2011-2012 / 2012-2013 seasons)	- Sample size does not need to be pre-determined, since the number of French-language learners who attend <i>L’UniThéâtre’s</i> subtitled performances is unknown. -Targeted amount: 20 different participants per play for a total of 60 participants and survey responses.	- Sample size does not need to be pre-determined, since the number of non-Francophone Canadians, Francophone/bilingual Canadians and Anglophones who attend <i>L’UniThéâtre’s</i> subtitled performances is unknown -Targeted amount: 20 participants who would attend all three plays for a total of 60 survey responses
SAMPLING METHOD	Volunteer sampling: Audience members chose to participate on a voluntary basis after having seen a performance at <i>L’UniThéâtre</i>	Convenience and Volunteer sampling: University of Alberta/Campus Saint-Jean students taking a French course fit the profile and were readily available. Those interested in participating contacted the researcher.	Mixture of quota, purposive and convenience sampling: Participants that were available and willing to participate for the duration of the study were selected by the researcher and divided into linguistic categories based on their sociolinguistic backgrounds.

Table 4: Description of Sample Groups and Sampling Methods

Additionally, participants were recruited and compensated for their participation in the study in the following manners:

	GROUP 1	GROUP 2	GROUP 3
RECRUITMENT METHODS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -No direct contact to researcher prior to study -French-language radio interview with the researcher²² -Announcements made by <i>L'UniThéâtre's</i> Artistic Director /Researcher prior to performances -Flyer with links to surveys inside <i>L'UniThéâtre</i> programs. -Announcements on <i>L'UniThéâtre's</i>, the Edmonton Arts Council's and Theatre Alberta's Facebook pages and/or websites. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Announcements made by researcher in university French courses -Announcement posted on French courses' website and distributed to students via email. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participants contacted directly by researcher by means of an email invitation to participate in study
COMPENSATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Option to enter a draw (administered by <i>L'UniThéâtre</i>) to win a season's subscription for <i>L'UniThéâtre's</i> 2015-2016 season after completion of survey. Option of participating in the study up to three times (since there were three performances). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complimentary ticket for specific performance (1 ticket per participant) with no option of entering in the draw. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complimentary ticket (x3) for specific performances (x3) with no option of entering in the draw.

Table 5: Sample Groups of Study Participants

While it was not deemed feasible to reproduce a statistically representative sample of the population, in order to obtain a sample size that would minimally represent *L'UniThéâtre's* regular patrons, the projected amount of responses required from participants belonging to Group 1 was determined based on 20% of the total attendance (excluding recruited participants from Groups 2 and 3) for each respective theatre production that was part of this study. However, due to the fact that participation was anonymous to respect the confidentiality of participants and that participants from Group 1 (*L'UniThéâtre* subscribers/members of the general public) could participate in the study up to three times (once for each theatre production), participation in the study cannot be based on the number of participants. While it is assumed to be rather improbable that many patrons decided to participate in the study more than once, we must nevertheless consider the number of survey responses submitted, rather than the number of individual participants. This is one limitation related to the “live” nature of this study: in the case of Group

²² A French-language radio interview with the researcher was aired on Radio Canada's La Croisée on October 28, 2014 and titled “Les surtitres au théâtre” http://ici.radio-canada.ca/emissions/la_croisee/2014-2015/chronique.asp?idChronique=353462

1 participants, their participation was not regulated. A question could have been added to the survey to ask about previous participation in the study.

The table below indicates the total number of survey responses per group that were collected for each of the three productions of *L'UniThéâtre's* 2014-2015 theatre season. As we can see, the number of survey responses collected for each group per performance, as well as the overall total survey responses that were collected per group over the course of the study, are of quite similar proportions, with the largest proportion of overall survey responses received from Group 1 participants. Of these participants, 22% indicated that they were *L'UniThéâtre* season pass subscribers and 45% indicated that they regularly attended theatre productions at *L'UniThéâtre*. When we factor the overall responses from all three participant Groups, 21% of all participants (Groups 1, 2 and 3) indicated that they were regular *L'UniThéâtre* attendees.

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	TOTAL SURVEY RESPONSES COLLECTED
<i>La Corneille</i>	26 (41%)	18 (29%)	19 (30%)	63
<i>Tubby et Nottubby</i>	19 (33%)	20 (34%)	19 (33%)	58
<i>Jean et Béatrice</i>	20 (35%)	21 (36%)	17 (29%)	58
TOTAL OVERALL SURVEY RESPONSES PER GROUP	65 (36%)	59 (33%)	55 (31%)	179

Table 6: Number of Survey Responses per Group, per Production and Overall Responses per Group

The targeted amount of participants for Group 2 and Group 3 were more or less achieved. Over the course of the study, a total of three participants from Group 3 withdrew from the study (either formally or informally). One participant from Group 3 did not attend the first production, nor the third production, another withdrew their participation following the first production, and a third did not attend the final production.

When considering the survey responses from Group 1 alone, the response rate of 20% based on the total audience attendance (excluding recruited participants) was not achieved. As we can see from the table below, based on the total number of survey responses submitted by

Group 1 participants, the total response rate for this group was approximately 17% of the total audience attendance for *La Corneille*, but only 8% of the total audience attendance for *Tubby et Nottubby* and 7% of the total audience attendance for *Jean et Béatrice*. If we consider the responses from Group 1 alone, the overall response rate for all three productions is only 7%, which does not represent a significant portion of *L'UniThéâtre's* audience members. However, if we combine the responses from all three groups of participants (Groups 1, 2 and 3) and include the recruited participants in the total audience attendance, the amount of survey responses per play represents 20% of the total audience attendance rates. In this sense, Group 2 and Group 3, the “simulated” groups, served to create an artificial response rate of 20% of the total audience members (including recruited participants) who attended the respective performances.

	RESPONSE RATE - GROUP 1	RESPONSE RATE INCLUDING RECRUITED PARTICIPANTS (GROUPS 2 & 3)
<i>La Corneille</i>	17%	33%
<i>Tubby et Nottubby</i>	8%	22%
<i>Jean et Béatrice</i>	7%	18%
TOTAL RESPONSE RATE ACCORDING TO TOTAL AUDIENCE ATTENDANCE FOR ALL PRODUCTIONS	7%	20%

Table 7: Response Rates Per Play and Overall Response Rates

Since no linguistic background check was performed on participants prior to their participation in the study, the results to three different survey questions regarding participants’ language background²³ were used to categorize the participants’ different levels of French-language proficiency according their first language (L1). Combining the participants’ answers to these three questions provides the following general portrait of the participants’ varying French-language proficiency.²⁴

²³ *Section Two: Surtitles and Language*, Question 6 (participants declared whether they were Francophone and if so, whether they had recourse to the surtitles); *Section Three: Your Language Background*, Question 8 (participants declared their L1) and Question 17 (participants self-evaluated their French-language proficiency on a Likert scale of 1- “not at all fluent” to 10 -“fluent”). *Certain participants indicated they were not Francophone, but self-evaluated their French proficiency as 7 or higher (“fluent”). In these cases, these participants were placed in the “Francophone” category.

²⁴ Consult the *Appendix* for a detailed version which includes the distribution of participants’ first languages per performance.

	Self-Declared Francophone Status	Participant L1 (Self-Declared First Language)	French Fluency Ratings		
			1-4 ("Not fluent")	5-6	7-10 ("Fluent")
OVERALL SURVEY RESPONSES SUBMITTED	Total (Yes): 89 (49% of total participants)	French L1 (29%) English L1 (28%) French & English L1 (24%) Other L1 (19%)	--	--	(100%)
	Total (No): 90 (50% of total participants)	French L1 (0%) English L1 (85%) French & English L1 (2%) Other L1 (13%)	(69%)	(31%)	--

Table 8: Self-Declared Francophone Status and French Fluency Ratings Per Participant L1 Based on Overall Survey Responses Submitted (Groups 1, 2 and 3)

As we can see, both the Francophone and non-Francophone groups are divided virtually equally, and we see that the participants' L1 backgrounds and levels of self-rated French-language proficiency vary. Due to the subjective nature of these participant responses, this does not render an accurate representation of the participants' French language abilities, but nevertheless provides an approximate account.

The table below indicates the L1 distribution for Group 1, including the overall L1 distribution for all of the survey responses collected for all three performances. We can see that the distribution of English, and bilingual (French & English) L1 participant responses are very similar for Group 1, as compared to the overall distribution (including Groups 2 and 3), with the exception of the French L1 category: there was a higher concentration of French L1 participants in Group 1 as opposed to the overall percentage (including Groups 2 and 3). There is also a significant difference between the proportion of responses for the category "Other L1": Group 2 and Group 3 had significantly more participants with an L1 other than French and English, although the number of such participants was small.

GROUP 1 L1	English L1	French L1	FR & EN L1	Other L1
<i>La Corneille</i>	13 (50%)	10 (38%)	3 (12%)	0 (0%)
<i>Tubby et Nottubby</i>	10 (53%)	4 (21%)	4 (21%)	1 (5%)
<i>Jean et Béatrice</i>	12 (60%)	3 (15%)	3 (15%)	2 (10%)
TOTAL GROUP L1 DISTRIBUTION	35 (54%)	17 (26%)	10 (15%)	3 (5%)
OVERALL L1 DISTRIBUTION (Including Group 2 and Group 3)	95 (53%)	30 (17%)	22 (12%)	32 (18%)

Table 9: L1 Distributions for Group 1, Including Overall L1 Distributions

Those who indicated that they had a first language other than French, English or both French and English (“Other L1”) have the following first language: Spanish, German, Dutch, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Serbian, Romanian, Polish, Ukrainian, Arab, Urdu, Hindi, Lemande (Bantu), Filipino, Mandarin, Cantonese and Korean.

In order to gain a deeper understanding as to the linguistic backgrounds of participants, they were asked to specify the location where they spent the majority of their childhood²⁵, since linguistic development is usually a process which occurs during the early years of life and language is geographically, culturally, as well as socially influenced. Below is a table indicating the distributions of responses for Group 1. The majority of English L1 respondents grew up in Anglophone towns and cities of Alberta, but specifically Edmonton, while the French L1 respondents are predominantly from Québec and Francophone towns of Alberta.

OVERALL GROUP 1 RESPONSES			
Locations where Participants Spent the Majority of Childhood			
ENGLISH L1 (35 participants = 54%)	FRENCH L1 (17 participants = 26%)	FRENCH and ENGLISH L1 (10 participants = 15%)	OTHER L1 (3 participants = 5%)
Alberta (69%)	Quebec (41%)	Alberta (40%)	Alberta (25%)
United States (11%)	Alberta (29%)	Saskatchewan (40%)	China (75%)
Ontario (8%)	France (12%)	Ontario (20%)	
Manitoba (3%)	Saskatchewan: (6%)		
England (3%)	New-Brunswick (6%)		
British-Columbia (3%)	Switzerland (6%)		
Saskatchewan (3%)			

Table 10: Locations Where Group 1 Participants Spent the Majority of their Childhood

According to the overall survey results for Group 2, most of the English L1 respondents spent the majority of their childhood in Alberta (in Edmonton specifically), while all of the French L1 participants grew up in Quebec. The bilingual (French & English L1) participants are predominantly from Alberta and Ontario. Group 2 had the largest proportion of participants with an L1 other than French or English and the largest distribution linguistic backgrounds.

²⁵ Question 5 (Section 3: Your Language Background)

OVERALL GROUP 2 RESPONSES			
Locations where Participants Spent the Majority of Childhood			
ENGLISH L1 (30 participants= 51%)	FRENCH L1 (3 participants= 5%)	FRENCH and ENGLISH L1 (9 participants = 15%)	OTHER L1 (17 participants = 29%)
Alberta (83%) <i>*Majority Edmonton</i> British-Columbia (10%) Ontario (3.5%) England(3.5%)	Quebec (100%)	Alberta (56%) Ontario (22%) Quebec (11%) British-Columbia (11%)	Alberta (23.5%) Ontario (11.7%) British-Columbia (11.7%) Manitoba (5.9%) Saudi Arabia (5.9%) Pakistan (5.9%) Romania (5.9%) Taiwan (5.9%) Philippines (5.9%) India (5.9%) Tunisia (5.9%) China (5.9%)

Table 11: Locations Where Group 2 Participants Spent the Majority of their Childhood

The English L1 participants from Group 3 are also primarily from Alberta, and principally from Edmonton. The other distributions of locations are specified in the table below:

OVERALL GROUP 3 RESPONSES			
Locations where Participants Spent the Majority of Childhood			
ENGLISH L1 (10 participants = 53%)	FRENCH L1 (4 participants = 21%)	FRENCH and ENGLISH L1 (1 participant = 5%)	OTHER L1 (4 participants = 21%)
Alberta (70%) Saskatchewan 1 (10%) Manitoba 1 (10%) Ontario 1 (10%)	France (50%) Alberta (25%) Tunisia (25%)	Cameroun (100%)	Manitoba (25%) Ukraine (25%) Russia (25%) Cameroun (25%)

Table 12: Locations Where Group 3 Participants Spent the Majority of their Childhood

Although age is not a factor that is being considered in the analysis of the results, for purposes of transparency, the distribution of participants' age range for Group 1 and all three groups of participants is as follows:

PARTICIPANT AGE RANGE	Group 1 Responses	Overall Responses (Including Group 2 & 3)
18-24	1.6%	27.1%
25-34	22.2%	32.1%
35-44	11.1%	6.4%
45-54	12.7%	7.9%
55-64	31.7%	16.4%
65-74	17.5%	8.6%
75+	3.2%	1.5%

Table 13: Participants' Age Range According to Group 1 and Overall Participants

There was also one profoundly deaf participant who participated twice in the study by responding to the surveys for *La Corneille* and *Tubby et Nottubby*, respectively.

In summary, while the projected 20% response rate from Group 1 participants was not achieved, the overall response rate including all three groups of participants does represent approximately 20% of the total audience attendance for each of the three *L'UniThéâtre* productions. The participants ranged in age and had various linguistic backgrounds. The overall participants had varying levels of French language proficiency, and the distribution of Francophones with high French proficiency, and Anglophones with no French language knowledge to moderate French language proficiency was virtually equal.

There are some limitations with regards to the analysis of the participant groups. As mentioned, the subjective nature of the responses regarding French-language proficiency do not render the data accurate, and the locations where participants spent the majority of their childhood are merely indicative of the varying language backgrounds, but do not provide any accurate assessment of sociolinguistic profiles. Again, since participants could respond to the survey up to three times if they had attended all three performances, the total participation rate cannot be measured by number of individuals, but rather by number of survey responses submitted. If some participants from Group 1 did respond to the survey more than once, this makes the above calculations slightly inaccurate, since their responses to the same language background questions would have been factored in either two or three times. Yet, as mentioned, it is very unlikely that Group 1 participants chose to complete the survey more than once.

3.2.) Surveys and Focus Group

Three different modes of data-collection were used over three different phases of the study: 1.) a questionnaire sent to the Artistic and General Directors of the Francophone theatres, 2.) a survey filled out by non-recruited and pre-recruited participants who attended one or all of the three theatre productions, 3.) a focus group conducted with a group of students who attended performances of *Jean et Béatrice*. The formats of these data-collection methods are as follows.

The Artistic and General directors of the above-specified theatres (as specified in *Section A: Participants*) were sent an email invitation to participate in the study by completing a questionnaire regarding the use of surtitles at their respective theatres. The questionnaire consisted of twelve open-response questions addressing the following issues: 1.) the year when the surtitles were first implemented and why; 2.) the advantages and disadvantages of the use of surtitles; 3.) whether the surtitles have modified the type and number of audience members who attend their performances; 4.) known audience reactions to the surtitles based on audiences' linguistic background; 5.) whether the theatre companies have an in-house surtitler; 6.) how systematically the surtitles are used for productions; 7.) the technical means by which the surtitles are displayed during productions; 8.) whether there are financial benefits from using surtitles; 9.) assessment of financial and symbolic gains; 10.) how the theatre companies finance the surtitles; 11.) their willingness to pay for the commissioning of surtitles; and 12.) whether the theatre companies could do without using surtitles. The responses from each Artistic Director were compared and this qualitative data was used to formulate a summary of the impact of surtitles in these Francophone minority theatre contexts.

The surveys that were completed by the non-recruited (Group 1) and pre-recruited (Group 2 and Group 3) participants were available in the following manners. Participants had the option of completing an online or printed version of the survey in either French or English. The links to the online survey were included on a flyer inserted into the program of each play and audience members could access and complete the survey up to five days following the final performance of each play. Printed surveys in either language were distributed in the lobby after each performance. These surveys were accompanied by a postage paid envelope addressed to the researcher's office and included a mailing deadline. The links to the online survey were sent to

Group 2 and Group 3 participants via email the same evening or morning following each performance.

The survey addressed both sociological and audiovisual variables and was divided into three sections that contained both multiple choice and open-response questions. Section One (*Your Experience with Surtitles*) was designed to determine whether participants were regular *L'UniThéâtre* attendees and to evaluate the technical aspects of the surtitles. The first set of questions addressed where participants were seated, whether they used the surtitles, whether they were subscribers or regularly attend performances at *L'UniThéâtre* and whether they are hard of hearing or visually impaired. The remainder of the questions were focused on the technical aspects of the surtitles with regards to screen and text positioning; colour and brightness; text size; amount of text; synchronization/ the audiences' ability to link the dialogue with the appropriate speaker; the audiences' evaluation of the translation; the comprehensibility of the surtitles; reading time; the audiences' focus of attention on stage; the participants' strategies for using or ignoring the surtitles; and the overall influence of the surtitles on their experience. Questions from Borg's (2007) study on theatre surtitles for the aurally handicapped were adapted for this section²⁶. Section Two (*Surtitles and Language*) included questions regarding the language learning potentials of the surtitles, the Francophone audience members' use of the surtitles, as well as questions regarding the participants' use of subtitles for language learning (although this question was excluded from the analysis of the survey results). Section Three (*Your Language Background*) included questions regarding participants' sociodemographics, including their age, level of education, birthplace and location where the majority of their childhood was spent, their citizenship and immigrant status, their first and second languages spoken, their French language background and proficiency, and questions regarding their cultural attitudes and cultural identity. These variables were collected with the original intent of analyzing participants' individual levels of bilingualism and determining sociolinguistic categories and determining trends regarding the use of surtitles according to the varying levels of bilingualism and cultural identity. However, including all of these aspects would lead to saturation of the data and rendered the scope of analysis far too ambitious. While it may have yielded fruitful results to include the

²⁶ With regards to the amount of text, text size, content, text positioning, synchronization, whether the audience was able to follow events on stage and how surtitles influenced the audience's experience. (See page 7 of Borg's English abstract PDF.)

bilingual aspect in the study, several of these questions were omitted from the analysis of the survey results due to this complexity. In the end, the focus of the analysis, while originally meant to include all sociodemographic variables collected through the survey responses, was limited to the participants' first language(s) and their French language background and proficiency.

The focus group was conducted on April 7th, 2015 at the University of Alberta and consisted of ten students who were enrolled in a FREN 454/554 course (*Translation: English to French*) and who had attended a performance of *Jean et Béatrice* as recruited participants. The total duration of the discussion was approximately 30 minutes and the topics discussed included their general opinions about their experience with the surtitles, insight into their strategies for reading the surtitles and focusing their attention on stage, insight into whether the surtitles helped for cognitive reinforcement and vocabulary acquisition, insight into their opinion on whether French surtitles would be more beneficial for language learning, and how their experience watching a surtitled play differed from watching a subtitled movie. Seeing as the discussion flowed naturally, this led to other discussions on some of the technical aspects of the surtitles for *Jean et Béatrice*.

3.3.) Data Analysis Procedures

Using a mixed methods approach, the data collected was analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The following sections outline the data analysis procedures applied to this study. They are described using descriptive analysis, meaning that the strategies used for and the process applied to this study are documented in order to ensure transparency and to enable researchers to refine this model for future studies.

3.3.a.) Technical Aspects of Surtitles

The data analysis of the technical aspects of the surtitles was completed by the researcher both manually and using Excel. Measurements of the screen dimensions, height from the stage floor and distance from the first and last rows of the seating areas were either manually calculated by the researcher at the end of the respective production runs, or supplied to the researcher by the Technical Director of *L'UniThéâtre*. Using trigonometry, the researcher calculated the viewing

distances from the screen to the front and back rows of the seating area for each production using an estimated eye-level height of 4ft when audience members are seated. The measurements are not 100% accurate, since some measurements were estimated, so it is important to state that there is some margin of error with regards to the calculated viewing distances.

In order to determine the amount of characters per line and per surtitle (including spaces), the surtitles were converted from PowerPoint into Microsoft Word format and formatted into a table, which was subsequently input into an Excel spreadsheet. The LEN formula, which calculates the number of characters in a text string, was applied to each line of each surtitle. The number of characters per one-, two- and three-line surtitles for each performance were calculated by using the SUM formula in Excel and combining the character counts for each line. The average characters per one-, two- and three-line surtitles were subsequently calculated by filtering each type of surtitle and using the “Average” function in Excel. It should be noted that character calculators for office programs such as Word or Excel will result in a somewhat arbitrary measure, since characters in themselves are not the same length; an ‘I’ does not have the same value nor length as an ‘M’ (Bataillon et al., p.24).

In order to track the display times of the surtitles, recordings of each performance²⁷ for each production were made by the researcher using a GoPro video recorder which was placed on the second balcony in front of the sound and lighting booth of the theatre, directly across from the stage. The recordings were used to track the display times, which were recorded manually. However, the video control-bar did not display milliseconds and in consequence, the projections may have lasted up to half a second less or more than what was recorded manually. As a result, the calculated averages are not exact, however they nevertheless provide an approximate representation of the display times.

These manually recorded display times were transferred to Excel and the average display times for one-, two- and three-line surtitles were subsequently calculated by filtering each type of surtitle and using the “Average” function in Excel. This was done for a total of four performances of *La Corneille*²⁸ and a total of three performances of *Tubby et Nottubby*.²⁹ After doing so, a trend

²⁷ With the exception of the November 7th, 2014 performance of *La Corneille*, the January 29th, 2015 performance of *Le Destin tragi-comique de Tubby et Nottubby* and the March 29th, 2015 performance of *Jean et Béatrice*: the researcher failed to press the record button on the GoPro camera during these performances.

²⁸ October 30th, November 1st, 5th and 9th, 2014

²⁹ January 30th and 31st, and February 1st, 2015

was revealed: the average display times for one-, two- and three-line surtitles were rather consistent from one performance to the next and so it was determined unnecessary to repeat this step when calculating the average display times for *Jean et Béatrice*.³⁰ In this case, only one recording was used, since it was assumed that the trend would have been the same. The minimum and maximum display times for one-, two- and three-line surtitles were also determined using the filter function in Excel.

Calculating the display times manually was not efficient: it was a painstaking and time-consuming process. For future studies on the reception of theatre surtitles, it would be beneficial to find software that can time the length of the slide projections. Unfortunately, due to the timing of this particular study, this is an aspect that was overlooked prior to the study taking place.

Using the average display times and average character counts per one-, two- and three-line surtitles, approximate reading speeds for each type of surtitle (one-, two-, three-line, and split-dialogue) were calculated based on the following established subtitling norm: 2 lines = 80 characters = 5 1/3 seconds, which results in a reading speed of around 175wpm (Ivarsson & Carroll, 1998, p.67). This calculation was done using the approximate mean value of five (5) characters (or letters) per English word. It is important to remember that the character counts that were calculated for each surtitle include spaces and punctuation. The approximate reading speeds outlined in Chapter 4, section 4.2.b.1. should therefore not be deemed as being intrinsically accurate.

These were the only necessary technical aspects to measure. The other technical aspects, such as font colour and background, typeface, and text positioning were the same for all three productions.

Simple graphs, tables and charts are used throughout Chapter 4 to summarize the data and provide a visual account of the differences (and convergences) between the technical aspects for each performance. The spatial parameters and layout (position of screen, number of lines, text positioning, amount of text, typeface and distribution, font colour and background and brightness of text) and the temporal parameters of the surtitles (duration of one-, two- and three-line surtitles, minimum and maximum display times, and synchronization) were then evaluated according to

³⁰ April 5th, 2015

the analysis of the participants' survey responses in order to make generalizations about the audiences' overall evaluations of the technical aspects of the surtitles for each performance.

3.3.b.) Survey Responses

No computerized data analysis software was used to analyze the survey responses. Instead, they were analyzed manually using the filter function and certain formulas in Microsoft Excel, using a deductive approach, having grouped the data according to the survey questions and examined the similarities and differences between the results to make generalizations of the findings. The results were also analyzed, and are reported upon in Chapter 4, using descriptive analysis.

The results from Section One of the survey regarding the technical aspects of surtitles were grouped into categorical data according to whether the participants “used” or “did not use” the surtitles, since reception of the technical aspects of the surtitles is not contingent upon the participants' language background, nor on the translation displayed in the surtitles. Relative frequency statistics (percentages) were calculated to depict the results. The survey results from Section One for each performance were compared to the technical aspects of each performance in order to determine the audiences' overall reception and evaluation of these aspects and to discern their viewing habits and preferences.

The results associated with the questions related to linguistic and cultural aspects and the language learning potentials of surtitles (Section Two of survey) were also categorized analyzed using percentages to depict the results, but this time, according to participants' L1s. As mentioned in Section B of this chapter, sociological variables were collected in Section Three of the survey with the original intent of analyzing participants' individual levels of bilingualism and determining sociolinguistic categories and trends regarding the use of surtitles according to the varying levels of bilingualism. However, this was deemed as being too complex for analysis purposes and as a result, the research objective was modified. Instead of attempting to categorize participants by their levels of bilingualism, it was decided that a simpler and sufficient approach to categorization would be to group the results according to the participants' self-declared first languages (English L1; French L1; French and English L1; and Other L1) and to supplement these results with the collected data regarding participants' language background. The qualitative

data collected through the open-response questions was also used to complement the results when appropriate, allowing the results to be further nuanced and clarified when necessary.

3.3.c.) Focus Group

The audio recording of the focus group was transcribed and analyzed by coding the content into analytic themes and served as a supplement to both the results regarding the technical aspects, as well as the language learning potentials of surtitles. Where relevant, the results of the focus group are integrated into the analysis in Chapter 4.

3.4.) The Surtitled Target Texts and Beneficial/Problematic Aspects for Reception

There were a number of technical and translation issues that are necessary to consider with regards to the reception of the surtitles. The following sections outline certain aspects that were assumed to be beneficial or problematic to reception for each of the three productions that took place at *L'UniThéâtre* during the duration of this study.

3.4.a.) La Corneille

The performance of *La Corneille* was characterized by subtle expressions and actions on stage, dense dialogs between two actors, as well as narrative monologues. Using the translation strategy of “condensed-direct translation” resulted in lengthier surtitles for this production (approximately 50% of the total slides were two-lines and 20% were three-lines). However, the pace of the performance allowed for longer display times than those for *Tubby et Nottubby* and *Jean et Béatrice*. It was assumed that the longer display times and subtle actions on stage would allow for greater readability of the surtitles compared to the other two productions. Additionally, given the nature of the narrative monologues, many of the surtitles only included one speaker, which also lead to the assumption the audience may have an easier time following the play. Furthermore, including longer segments of text in the surtitles would allow the audience more time to focus

their attention on the subtleties of expression and action on stage, and alternatively may minimize the distraction to audience members who do not need to make use of the surtitles. The following traits were considered to favour the audiences' reception of the surtitles for this production.

The story of *La Corneille* was narrated by the main actress and the temporal dimension of the play switched back and forth between the narration of past events, and the representation of these events as if they were occurring in the present. In order to delineate this temporal dimension on the screen, italics were used when the main character was narrating the past events and regular font was used when the scenes from the past were being re-enacted. This led the translator/researcher to wonder whether or not this would be understood by the audience and whether it facilitated the experience or whether the italics would be distracting and/or affect the readability and legibility of the surtitles.

3.4.b.) Le Destin tragi-comique de Tubby et Nottubby

The creation of the surtitles for *Le Destin tragi-comique de Tubby et Nottubby* involved certain challenges. This play was a bilingual production: approximately 70% of the dialogue was in French, and the other 30% in English, switching back and forth between both languages, but never combining the two, there being a clear division between French and English³¹. The surtitler/researcher was faced with the dilemma of whether or not to reproduce the bilingual aspect in the surtitles. If the bilingual nature of the play were preserved in the surtitles, this was thought to place both French and English on equal grounds and could interestingly serve, at least from time to time, as reversed surtitling (original dialogue in L1-English and L2-French in surtitles) for non French-speaking audience members. Exposing them to French on the screen would allow them to see the French equivalents of the English dialogue spoken on stage. Additionally, supplying the French translation of the English dialogue would also benefit Francophones who do not have a firm grasp of the English language, although this would be quite rare given that generally, Francophones in Edmonton are able to speak English. The translator/researcher had initially wanted to preserve the bilingual aspect of the play in the surtitles, however the Artistic

³¹ As an interesting side note, the bilingual nature of the play reflects the actors'/creators' backgrounds, as Sophie Brecht is originally from England and Louis Fortier is originally from the province of Quebec, Canada.

Director, as the commissioner of the surtitles, had indicated that he did not see it necessary to include both languages, given the fact that Francophones residing in Edmonton are, for the most part, necessarily bilingual and understand English just as well as French.

It was difficult to consider the needs of all audience members for this production. The translator was faced with the quandary that Francophones would perceive the lack of French surtitles a shortfall to the surtitles, or even an insult to the French language and/or Francophone culture. The bilingual aspect of this production also meant that deaf or hard of hearing audience members would only be receiving about 70% of the dialogue, since the other 30% of dialogue spoken in English was not subtitled. Since surtitles are conceived to cater to the needs of the majority of the TA, displaying the English text when English is spoken on stage (intralingual subtitling), which would have been necessary for deaf and hard of hearing audience members' comprehension, would likely also have been distracting and perhaps ill perceived by both the bilingual Francophone and unilingual Anglophone audience members. Even if the bilingual nature of the production had been preserved in the surtitles, deaf or hard of hearing audience members would still not have been able to understand the other 30% of the dialogue, unless they were able to read French.

Another aspect that was challenging for ensuring the ultimate reception of this performance was the fact that a short segment of the performance was improvised (planned improvisation), interwoven with fixed lines. Surtitles are (currently) not adaptive to improvisation, unless a specialized live-titling software is used.³² This meant that the surtitler needed to be extremely vigilant about when to display and not display the surtitles – although the bilingual aspect itself made synchronizing the surtitles more challenging for this play overall. During improvised sections, there were no constant cues to follow; the surtitler merely had to pay close attention to when the non-improvised lines were being delivered.

Evidently, the improvisation meant that it was impossible to create consistent surtitles. One choice was to provide surtitles that would not be consistent with the improvised French/English dialogue, which would possibly have lead those who can understand French to think that the surtitles are erroneous. The other option was to not display surtitles at all during the improvised sections. In this case, it was assumed that audience members who need to rely on the surtitles

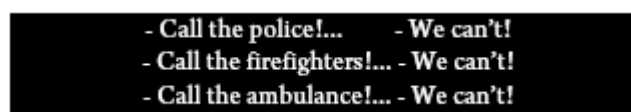
³² Perhaps, if one used a software like *Qstit* (<http://subtitles.nova-cinema.org/home.en.php>), it would be possible to subtitle the improvised sections live.

might not be able to realize that the scene is being improvised, leading them to think that there is a technical error with the surtitles. In either case, both situations were unideal when considering the audience's reception of the performance. A third option would have been to display a message alerting the audience that the segment is improvised. In the end, it was decided that providing surtitles would interfere with the creative and theatrical nature of improvisation, so the choice was made to not display any surtitles during this part of the performance. It was assumed that the Anglophone audience would eventually make the connection that this was an improvised scene and that the audience would be able to figure out what was going on by focusing on the other semiotic aspects of the performance. The survey results should help indicate to what extent the lack of surtitles affected their experience.

The last factor that was thought to possibly interfere with the reception of this subtitled production was the fact that the surtitle screen was located quite high above the stage, located over the border of the main curtain. The main curtain consisted of large, billowy white drapery which was used as a backdrop onto which intricate scenes were projected or depicted through shadow work. The position of the surtitle screen was thus dictated by the aesthetic needs of the production, as having the screen located any lower would have interfered with the projected or shadow scenes. The height of the screen meant that there would be a greater distance between the stage and the screen, requiring audience members to shift their gaze a fair bit away from the stage to read the surtitles, especially when sitting in the lower rows of the theatre.

The surtitles for this production were already unconventional due to the bilingual nature of the performance, yet another unique aspect of the surtitles were that the music note symbol (♪) was used when the actors were signing. This was thought to suit the comic nature of the production and also to communicate this non-speech element to deaf and hard of hearing audience members.

There was also one section of rapidly exchanged dialogue that would not have been possible to read had the lines been separated onto several slides. As a solution, the translator/researcher chose to split the dialogue onto one surtitle, creating a "split-dialogue" surtitle:



- Call the police!... - We can't!
- Call the firefighters!... - We can't!
- Call the ambulance!... - We can't!

Figure 6: Example of Split-Dialogue Surttitle (*Tubby et Nottubby*, Slide 292)

There is no mention of this type of surtitling strategy in the existing research on surtitles, although this is not to say that this strategy has never been employed. This study is an opportunity to discover whether or not this strategy is effective.

3.4.c.) Jean et Béatrice

This production was by far the most complex and challenging to create surtitles for. Not only was the dialogue rapidly delivered on stage with quick exchanges between the two actors, it was also verbose with many instances of interruptions and overlapping speech. It was absolutely necessary to reduce the amount of text for these surtitles. Due to the speed of the dialogue, it would be impossible for the audience to read the surtitles and take in the performance on stage if certain segments were not omitted or reformulated – the audience would simply be reading. Nevertheless, the strategy of literal transfer or “condensed-direct” translation was still applied in the sense that the surtitles could have been further condensed had the bilingual audience context not been a factor for ensuring the ultimate reception of the surtitles. The surtitles remained quite text-heavy and quickly paced for certain segments of the performance, making it potentially challenging for the spectators to read.

A solution to conveying the message during sections of overlapping dialogue was to make extensive use of split-dialogue titles, meaning that one character’s text would be on the left side of the screen, and the other character’s on the right side.

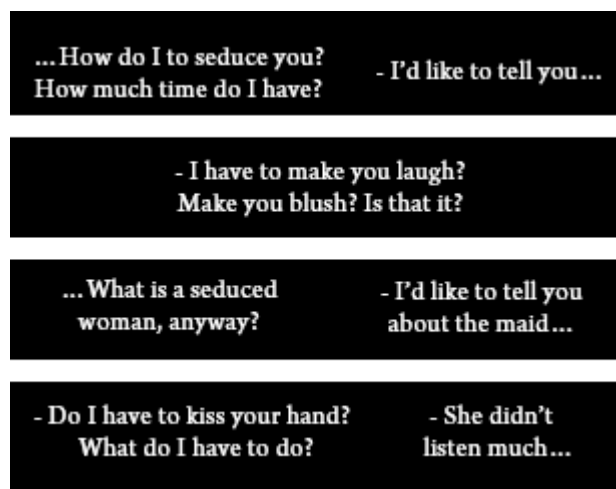


Figure 7: An Example of Split-Dialogue Surtitles (*Jean et Béatrice*, Slides 384-388)

As mentioned above, to the translator/researcher's knowledge, this is a strategy that has not been used before, and if so, it is undocumented in the current body of research on surtitling. It should be interesting to see whether or not this was an effective strategy not only for visually conveying the interruptions in dialogue, but also to helping spectators follow these rapid exchanges of dialogue.

Another factor which was thought to be problematic to the reception of the surtitles for this performance was the fact that there was a large window located directly below the surtitle screen onto which moving images were projected. This window served as the main backdrop of the set and was used throughout the performance. At times, when the image projected onto the screen was quite bright, this resulted in light pollution (Vervecken, 2012a) and interfered with the surtitles, rendering them quite dim and resulting in reduced visibility. It was thought that this could be detrimental to the reception of the surtitles for certain sections of this performance. Originally, the surtitler/researcher had wanted to use colour (i.e. light blue for *Jean's* character, light pink for *Béatrice's* character) to help the audience link the correct lines to the correct speaker more easily, however the light pollution rendered this impossible as the coloured text appeared too dim on the screen. If a different projector had been used, this strategy may have worked and been beneficial, especially for the split-dialogue surtitles which may have been easier to follow had the dialogue been colour-coded.

The surtitle screen was bigger than the screen dimensions for *La Corneille* and *Tubby et Nottubby*, and it was necessary to enlarge the text to cover the screen more naturally. The text size on the screen for *Jean et Béatrice* therefore appeared larger than the text appeared for the first two productions, even though the same font size was used for all three productions.

One last problematic aspect that was thought to effect the reception of the performance for audience members who needed to rely on the surtitles occurred at the beginning of the production. *Jean et Béatrice* began with images and text on the projected window screen (in French) contextualizing the opening scene. Originally, the translator/researcher had provided the translation in the surtitles, however during rehearsals, the Director demanded that there be no surtitles for this opening segment, his reasoning being that, for the most part, the displayed text described what the audience could see on the stage and he wanted the audience to be immersed in the surroundings. In the eyes of the translator/researcher, this was seen to be problematic for

the overall reception of the play for those who need the surtitles to understand the performance. The translator/researcher supposed that the absence of surtitles during the opening scene would 1.) exclude the non-French speaking audience and 2.) render them confused and likely to think that there is a problem with the surtitles. If this were the case, rather than be immersed in the opening scene, this group of audience members would be distracted and removed from the contextualization and surrounding environment of the play. However, the surtitler cannot ignore the director's comments/person commissioning the surtitles (Low, 2002). As Griesel notes, "the implicit skopos for the translation process is provided by the institution or person commissioning the surtitles, which however frequently contradicts the skopos that the translator chooses on the basis of aspects relevant to translation" (Griesel, 2005, p.71). These are some examples of the many conflicting forces that render the surtitling process somewhat difficult and also problematic for the audience's reception.

CHAPTER 4 – RESEARCH RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

The following chapter provides a description and interpretation of the research results. Section 4.1 describes a summary of the survey responses provided by the Artistic Director's of *Théâtre la seizième*, *L'UniThéâtre*, *La Troupe du jour*, *Le Cercle Molière* and *Théâtre français de Toronto*. These results serve to contextualize the surtitling context in minority Francophone theatres of Western Canada and Ontario. The next sections address the results of the study conducted at *L'UniThéâtre*, which are outlined for each production and subsequently compared. Section 4.2 provides an analysis related to the technical parameters of the surtitles for each production. Section 4.3 addresses the results related to linguistic and cultural aspects, including an analysis of the differing audience types' reasons for using or not using the surtitles, their strategies for using or ignoring the surtitles, the Anglophone and Francophone/bilingual audiences' use of the surtitles and the overall influence of the surtitles on their experience, as well as the language learners' responses regarding the language learning potentials of surtitles for learning the French language and/or about the French(-Canadian) culture.

4.1.) The Surtitling Context in Minority Francophone Theatres of Western Canada and Ontario

For the most part, the responses provided by the Artistic Directors are congruous and indicate that the use of surtitles is a particular phenomenon in these minority Francophone contexts. When asked what are the main reasons for presenting performances with surtitles, globally the responses included the following: 1.) Surtitles are a means for broadening the audience due to a small Francophone audience base; 2.) Surtitles enable exogamous couples (Francophone/Anglophone) to attend performances together; there are also Francophones who like to bring their Anglophone friends to the theatre; 3.) Surtitles are used to engage and encourage the participation of Francophiles and Anglophones and a means of sharing the French-Canadian/Francophone culture.

The advantages for the use of surtitles cited by each company were all similar in nature. The most cited advantage is that the surtitles make their productions accessible to a broader audience; without the surtitles their productions are otherwise inaccessible to non-French

speakers. The Artistic Director of *Théâtre français de Toronto* was the only one to address the fact that the surtitles also make their productions accessible to the deaf. All of the companies cited that the surtitles have increased their attendance rates and it was emphasized that while using surtitles resulted in a slight increase in revenue, the symbolic gains related to using surtitles is a much greater and important advantage than the financial gains. All of the Artistic Directors noted that the surtitles provided them with more exposure in the theatrical landscape and thus greater possibilities for recognition (theatre awards) since most of the judges do not speak French, and also allow their Anglophone counterparts to better understand the work being done in the Francophone theatre world, thus allowing for better exchange within the field of theatre. The use of surtitles has also increased the companies' sponsorship and donation potentials and have helped attract attention from Anglophone media sources. *La Troupe du jour* also cited the fact that surtitles provide possibilities for educational activities for school and university groups as an advantage.

There were but a few disadvantages brought forth. The Artistic Director of *Le Cercle Molière* noted the cost, technical problems and the fact that the audience's attention is split between the stage and reading the text on the screen as disadvantages. *Théâtre la seizième* also cited the added cost as being a disadvantage, as well as the logistical requirements of surtitles. However, the most prevalent disadvantage mentioned by all companies, except *L'UniThéâtre*, was that some Francophone audience members (including subscribers) find the surtitles distracting and would rather not have them. This is why all companies, with the exception of *L'UniThéâtre* and *Le Cercle Molière*, provide certain performances without surtitles. For instance, *Théâtre la seizième* only surtitles performances on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, *La Troupe du jour* surtitles all of their performances except on Sundays and *Théâtre français de Toronto* surtitles approximately 75% of their performances. This company has a policy of not surtitling performances for school groups because of pedagogical concerns.³³ This was not a specific question asked in the survey; the other companies may have dis/similar policies regarding

³³Although this is counterintuitive to the existing research on the benefits of AVT for language learning. Francophone school groups do not (or at least, should not) need the surtitles to understand French-language theatre performances, however French Immersion students are more than likely to need them. If the concern is that there should be no recourse to English to support comprehension, then the ideal solution would be to provide interlingual (French) surtitles.

the use of surtitles for presentations offered to school groups.

At present³⁴, *L'UniThéâtre* does not offer performances without surtitles, which means that Francophones who are disturbed by the surtitles do not have a choice of attending theatre performances without them. *Le Cercle Molière* is in a unique position, given that this company presents subtitles that are displayed on smartphones or tablets, which gives this company the advantage of presenting subtitles for all productions without compromising the experience for regular theatre goers and subscribers, since the titles are not present on a screen for everyone to see. This genre of AVT has in fact been dubbed as *entitling* by Miquel-Iriarte et al. (2012), who define it as a “caption system where the text is displayed on the screen of a digital mobile device [...and] offers the possibility of adding extraverbal and acoustic information, in a live mode” (p. 261-262). This seems to be a suitable solution for catering to both Francophone and Anglophone audience groups, without compromising the experience for the Francophones, who are the primary patrons of these minority Francophone theatres. The Artistic Director explains that the titles are sent to the audience’s devices (now tablets, provided by *Cercle Molière*) live from a computer located in the sound booth using a WI-FI internet connection.³⁵ The screens are equipped with anti-reflective glass, which means the people sitting beside someone using the subtitles cannot even see the text on the screen. It would be quite interesting to conduct a study on the reception of this form of theatre subtitling to gain a greater perspective as to how efficient and user-friendly this mode of delivery is.

All other theatre companies use Microsoft PowerPoint, a laptop computer and a standard projector to display the surtitles onto a screen located above the stage, or integrated into the set and decor of the production. *L'UniThéâtre* and *Théâtre français de Toronto* both expressed that they try as best possible to integrate the screen into the set. *La Troupe du jour* specified that their surtitle screen dimensions are 1’ x 6’ and that the surtitles are sometimes projected directly onto the set itself.

As for the people responsible for creating and projecting the surtitles, all companies, with the exception of *Théâtre la seizième*, have a (contracted) in-house surtitler. *L'UniThéâtre*, *La*

³⁴At the time during which the data was collected (2014-2015) and at the time during which this chapter was being written (July 2016).

³⁵ While Le Cercle Molière did not specify the software used, there are existing programs such as Figaro Systems Inc. (<http://www.figaro-systems.com/>) that enable titles to be delivered directly to electronic devices such as smartphones, tablets, and even Google Glass.

Troupe du jour, *Le Cercle Molière* and *Théâtre français de Toronto*'s sub/surtitlers all have university training in drama and translation or simply, translation. These in-house surtitlers translate the script/performance, segment and format the surtitles, or at times use an existing translation and adapt the translation, reducing the text when necessary. They take part in rehearsals for in-house productions, and when the company presents a hosted production, familiarize themselves with the play by practicing the pacing of the surtitles with the help of a video recording. At *Théâtre la seizième*, it is the stage manager who formats and projects the surtitles. Rather than translating the text and creating the surtitles in-house, this company has the French script translated into English by a professional translator and the stage manager subsequently transfers the English translation text to PowerPoint.

When asked the manners in which the surtitles have affected the type of audience members that attend their plays, all companies stated that the use of surtitles has resulted in an increase in Francophile and Anglophone audience attendance. An interesting comment to note is that *La Troupe du jour* expressed that while the surtitles have increased Anglophone audience members, as well as those with linguistic backgrounds other than French or English, the presence of surtitles has resulted in a slight diminishment of the Francophone audience. On the other hand, *Théâtre français de Toronto* noted that surtitles have helped significantly with increasing audience numbers; had it not been for surtitles, its audience base would not have grown to what it is today. The Artistic Director highlighted that people are captivated by the surtitles and are generally very pleased to have access to them.

The Artistic Directors were asked to assess, according to their experience, what are the reactions to the surtitles on the part of Francophone, Anglophone and bilingual audience members. The Artistic Director of *Théâtre la seizième* explains that for the most part, Francophones are comfortable with the presence of surtitles. *L'UniThéâtre*'s Artistic Director notes that "the reaction is primarily very positive" and although there "[t]here have been some negative reactions by francophone purists [...] by and large the reaction remains positive." Both *Théâtre la seizième* and *La Troupe du jour* emphasized that it is important to present certain performances without surtitles to accommodate these types of audience members. The Artistic Director of *Théâtre français de Toronto* commented that while it is clear that there are certain people who would prefer no surtitles, for the most part, the Francophone audience has become accustomed to the practice.

With regard to the Anglophone audience group, the comments provided by the Artistic Directors indicate these types of audience members really appreciate the experience, even though the surtitles do not enable them to understand 100% of the text, or reading the surtitles may at times prevent them from following the action on stage. The Artistic Director of *Le Cercle Molière*, made mention that the reactions have been generally positive from Anglophone audience members but that there have been comments regarding the fundamental difficulty of subtitling, entailing the need to read, listen and watch at the same time. With regard to the mode of delivery of the subtitles, *Cercle Molière* has received comments regarding the fact that it is more difficult to see far away and then from close up (on the smartphone or tablet) for someone who wears glasses.

As far as comments provided regarding bilingual audience member's reactions to the surtitles, the Artistic Director of *La Troupe du jour* was the only one to mention that according to his experience, these types of spectators can become distracted from the performance when they make use of the surtitles and begin analyzing the translation.

All five theatre companies confirmed that the cost of the surtitles is factored into their operating budgets, and *La Troupe du jour* and *Théâtre français de Toronto* have had sponsors who have funded at least part of the cost of the surtitles. When asked whether or not these companies could do without using surtitles, all of the Artistic Directors stated that they could not consider stopping the practice because of the advantages the surtitles bring, and also because they have become an integral part of their programming. The Artistic Director of *L'UniThéâtre* stated that while it would be possible to survive without the surtitles, "it would present a very retrograde step" and would be a decision the company would be "not prepared or willing to take" (Dooley, 2015). These responses emphasize how important the surtitles are in these theatre contexts.

Surtitles have thus become a fundamental part of the theatrical landscape of these minority Francophone theatre companies. While there are some disadvantages, these survey responses indicate that surtitles are a means by which these theatre companies can gain more visibility while making Francophone theatre accessible to the larger community and play an important role both culturally and economically. Their Francophone audiences have generally become accustomed to the practice of surtitles, and while few do not appreciate the surtitles, the majority of audience members, including Francophone, Francophile/Anglophone audience members are appreciative of the fact that surtitles are offered.

4.2.) Technical Aspects

In the following section, each subsection consists of an analysis of the survey results regarding the audiences' reception of the surtitles according to each respective technical parameter. The results for all three plays are analyzed at once and compared.

4.2.a.) Spatial Parameters (Layout and Readability)

Recall from section 2.2 a.) that spatial parameters encompass those factors that will effect the layout and readability of the surtitles and include: screen positioning, text positioning, font and background colour, text brightness, typeface and distribution, number of lines, number of characters per line, textual features and punctuation, lexical density, syntactic complexity, semantic coherence, text segmentation and blank titles.

4.2.a.1.) Position of Screen

The theatre at *La Cité francophone*, where *L'UniThéâtre* presents its plays, consists of a modern proscenium stage on ground level. This is important to consider when analyzing the position of the screen.



Figure 8: Photo of the Theatre of *La Cité francophone*'s Proscenium Stage

The screen for *La Corneille* was integrated into the set between two columns which formed part of the walls of a loft. It was situated in the centre of the set directly above what represented large windows. The screen measured 10 feet long and 2.5 feet wide. The top of the screen was 12 feet 5.5 inches from the stage floor, whereas the bottom of the screen was at a height of 10 feet 5 inches. Using these measurements, it was calculated that the centre of the surtitle screen was 12 feet 2.75 inches from ground level.



Figure 9: Screen Dimensions for *La Corneille*

This measurement was used to calculate the approximate viewing distance for audience members based on the front and back rows (row 1 and row 9), according to an estimated eye height of 4 feet when audience members are seated. The following diagram depicts these viewing distances, although it should be mentioned that the diagram has not been formatted to scale.

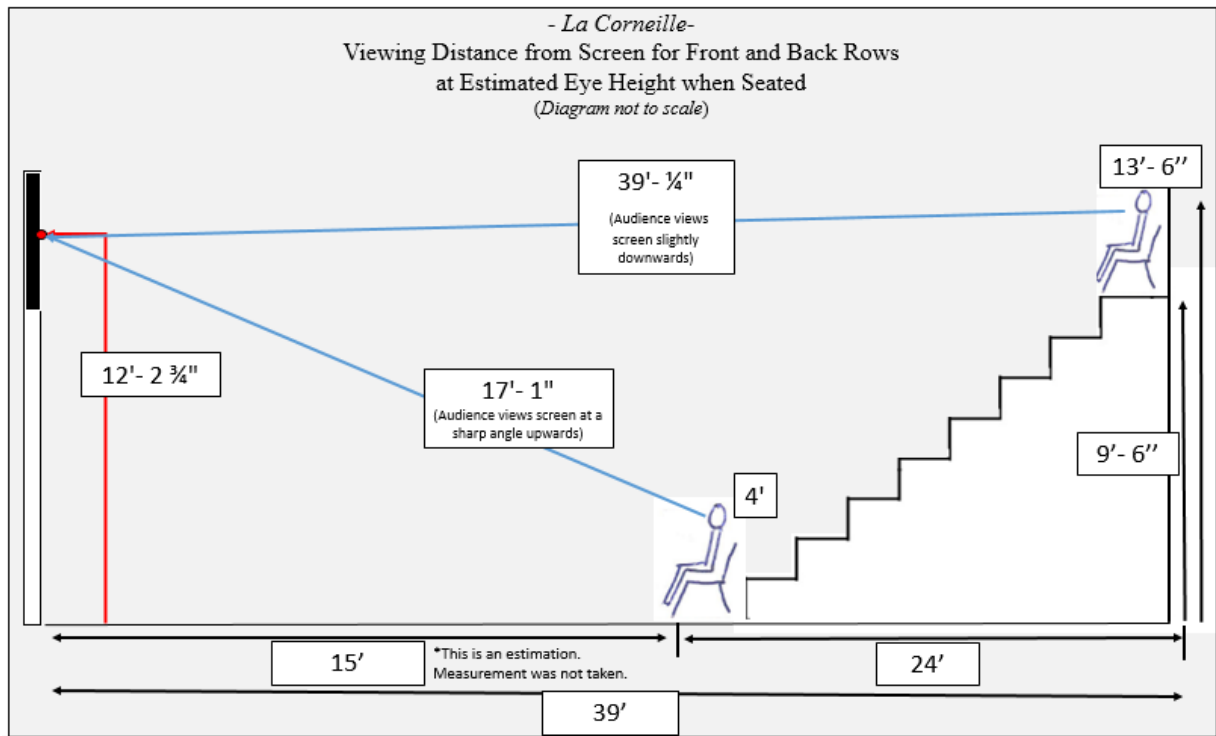


Figure 10: Viewing Distances from Seating Area to Surtitle Screen for *La Corneille*

A total of 90% of participants who *used* the surtitles stated that the position of the screen was “suitable”, whereas 10% stated that the position was “poor”. The largest number of participants who *used* the surtitles were seated in rows 1-5 (47%) and rows 6-9 (54%), with 2% sitting in the second balcony stage left. Of those participants who *used* the surtitles and rated the position of the screen as “poor”, 4% were sitting in rows 1-5 and 7% were sitting in rows 6-9.

Relative to the total number of spectators who *used* the surtitles and sat in row 1-5, 92% of participants rated the position of the screen as “suitable”. Applying the same calculations to the responses from the total number of participants sitting in row 6-9 results in a total of 87%. If we look at the participants who rated the screen position as being “poor” for each of these two seating sections, 8% of participants seated in rows 1-5 rated the position as “poor”, and 13% of participants were seated in rows 6-9. Looking at these numbers on the surface, we could conclude that the screen position was more suitable for audience members the closer to the stage they sat. In the field of surtitling, it has been long assumed that the surtitles are best viewed the further and higher up from the stage one sits. Due to the inconsistent dispersion of participants among the seating areas, it would be imprudent to interpret these results as indicating that this is not the case. The qualitative results do not help to lend more weight to one or the other assumption, however

they do demonstrate that, despite the fact that the position was rated overall as being “suitable”, the screen may have in fact still been too high for those sitting in both row 1-5 and row 6-9.

A total of ten comments regarding the height of the screen were provided in the open-response question regarding the quality of the surtitles at the end of the survey. Eight participants commented that the position of the screen was too high and mentioned that they would have appreciated having the screen located lower, and therefore closer, to the actors on stage to minimize the distance that their eyes had to travel. Four of these participants were sitting in row 1-5 and the other four in row 6-9 and the comments were made by both those participants who rated the screen position as “suitable” and those who rated it as “poor”. The following two comments summarize the overall comments provided:

Bien que la position des surtitres était correcte, je pense que j'aurai apprécié un tout petit peu plus bas, environ 2.5m du sol là où c'était à presque 4 mètres. Cela permet de faire moins de voyage pour les yeux donc de rater moins de choses. (Group3, French L1, Rows 6-9)

Since I was sitting in the lower rows there was quite a distance between the stage and the height of the surtitles, this meant missing portions of the acting performance, particularly the expressions on the actors' faces. In the future I would experiment with sitting higher up to try and minimize this distance thereby making the action and actors' expressions more accessible. (Group 3, English L1, Row 1-5)

One participant who, based on the comment they provided, seemed to be familiar with attending surtitled operas and performances at *L'UniThéâtre*, shared the following comment:

In the case of *La Corneille*, it would have served me better had I sat further back in the theatre. I have to admit this was probably even more important in the *L'UniTheatre* space because audience members look down to the stage rather than at the opera where the audience looks up to the stage. (Group 1, English L1, Row 1-5).

Another participant sitting higher up in the seating area shared their experience in determining the appropriate seating for the best viewing of the stage and the surtitles and assessed the height of the screen positively:

“Initially I was sitting in the first 6 rows, but I realized the angle of the surtitles weren't at a good viewpoint to read. I then moved back so I could be more aligned with the surtitle height. This made it much easier to read and then view the stage afterwards.” (English L1, Row 6-9)

Lastly, one participant shared a positive comment regarding the screen position, saying they were “impressed with the placement of the surtitles in relation to the set” because “the screen blended well with the scenery” (English L1).

Of the participants who indicated that they *did not* use the surtitles, 100% rated the position of the screen as being “suitable”. This leads to the conclusion that the surtitles were not a distraction for those audience members who did not need to use them.

If we combine the results from both groups of participants (those who *used* and those who *did not use* the surtitles), an overall majority of 90% of participants rated the position of the screen as “suitable” and only 10% rated it as being “poor”. It can thus be concluded that the surtitle screen for *La Corneille* was suitable for the audience’s viewing needs. However, based on the comments that were collected through the open-response portions of the survey, it would have facilitated the audiences’ viewing experience to have the screen placed lower.

The surtitle screen for *Tubby et Nottubby* was hung directly above the border of the stage curtains and had the same dimensions (10 feet long, 2.5 feet wide) as the screen for *La Corneille*.

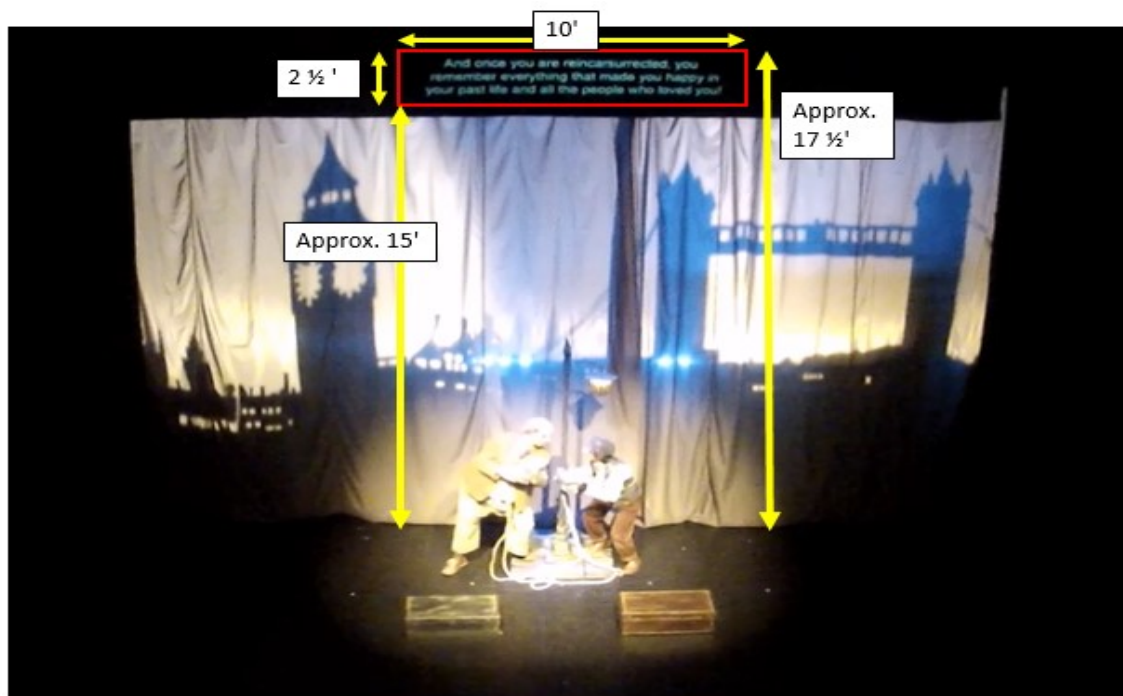


Figure 11: Screen Dimensions for *Tubby et Nottubby*

However, this time the surtitle screen was located significantly higher from the stage floor and was not integrated into the set. The height of the screen was contingent upon the fact that the

stage curtains were used to project scenes. Had the screen been located lower, it would have interfered with the projections and diminished the aesthetics of the production, as mentioned in Chapter 3, section 3.4.b). The top of the screen was approximately 17.5 feet high, while the bottom was approximately 15 feet from the stage floor.³⁶ Using these measurements, it was calculated that the centre of the screen was approximately 16 feet 3 inches from the floor; approximately 4 feet higher from stage level as the surtitle screen for *La Corneille*. Again, this measurement was used to calculate the approximate viewing distance for audience members from the front row and the back row (row 1 and row 9) based on the estimated eye height of 4ft. The following diagram depicts the approximate viewing distances for *Tubby et Nottubby*. Again, the diagram is not to scale.

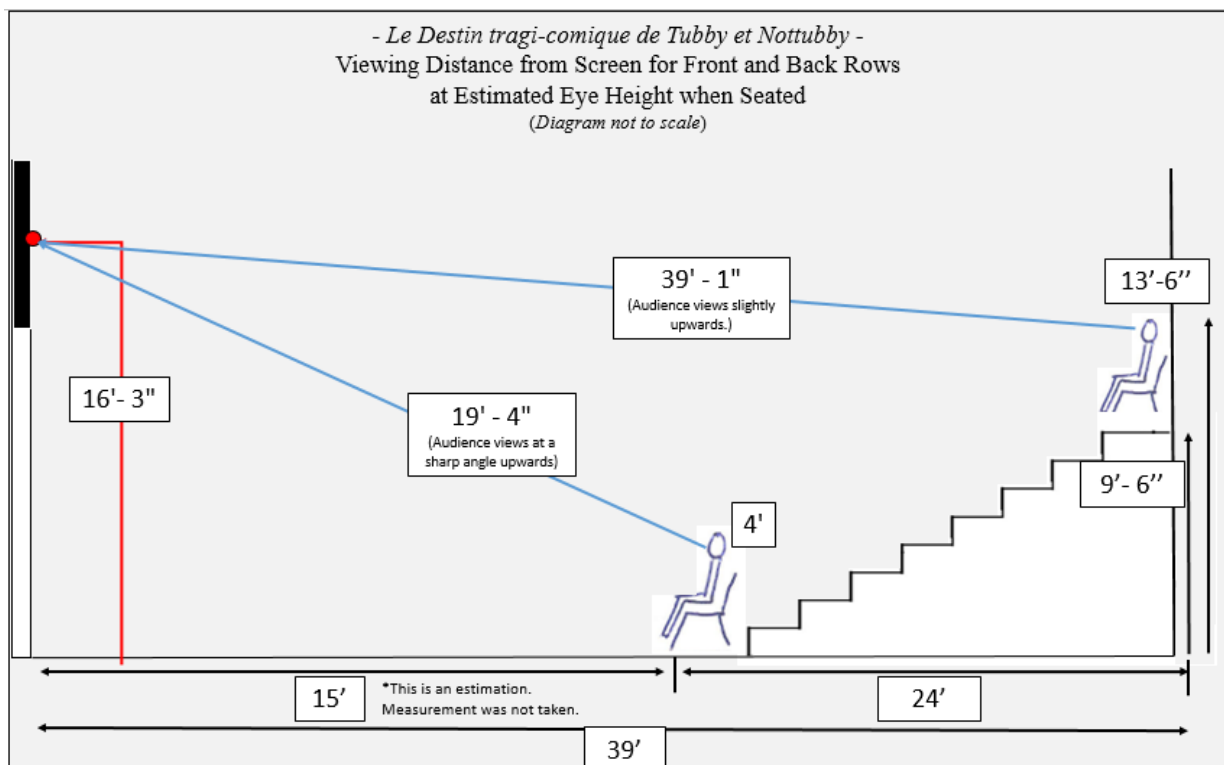


Figure 12: Viewing Distances from Seating Area to Surttitle Screen for *Tubby et Nottubby*

Of those participants who *used* the surtitles, 84% stated that the position of the screen was “suitable” and 16% of these participants stated that the position was “poor”. Those who rated the

³⁶ These two measurements are estimations that were provided by the Technical Director of L’UniThéâtre.

screen position as “suitable” were sitting in the following sections of the theatre: 36% in rows 1-5, 56% in rows 6-9 and a total of 2% in the 1st balcony centre, 1st balcony left, 1st balcony right, or the 2nd balcony centre (ie. total of 1 respondent per each of these seating areas). Of those participants who used the surtitles and rated the position of the screen as “poor”, 5% were sitting in rows 1-5 and 11% of respondents were sitting in rows 6-9.

Relative to the total amount of participants who *used* the surtitles and sat in row 1-5, 79% rated the position of the screen as “suitable”. Applying the same calculations to the responses for those who sat in rows 6-9 results in a total of 84% of audience members who rated its position as “suitable”. Looking at the percentages for those who rated the surtitles as “poor” according to the participants who *used* the surtitles and were seated in each of these two sections, 21% of these participants sat in row 1-5, as opposed to 16% respondents in rows 6-9. This is the opposite trend as was noted in the analysis of results for *La Corneille*. This time, the results seem to indicate that the position of the screen was most suitable the further up and farther away one sits from the stage.

For this play, 67% of participants who *did not* use the surtitles rated the position of the screen as being “suitable” and 33% of participants selected “Not Applicable”. These results indicate that the screen position did not interfere with these participants’ viewing experience. It is assumed that those who selected “Not Applicable” did so because they did not look, or rarely looked, at the screen. In this case, the position of the screen would also be considered as being suitable, since it poses no hindrance to those not needing to make use of the surtitles.

If we combine the participants who *used* and *did not use* the surtitles, the majority of participants (83%) rated the position of the screen as “suitable”, whereas 15% rated it as being “poor” and 2% selected “Not Applicable”. When comparing these results with those for *La Corneille*, we see that the satisfaction rate dropped from 90% to 83% and that the dissatisfaction rate increased from 10% to 15%. According to these results, the position of the screen for *La Corneille* was better adapted for the overall viewing experience. We can see from the diagram above that this time, even when sitting in the last row (row 9), the audience was sitting around 2 ½ feet lower than the screen and had to look up to read the surtitles. This creates a greater viewing distance between the actors on stage on the screen, and increases the angle at which participants have to look up and back down, especially for those sitting in the lower rows.

Of the four comments regarding the screen position that were provided in the open-response questions of the survey, three participants sitting in row 6-9 noted that the screen was too high, one of them noting that in hindsight, they “would have preferred to sit higher in the first balcony” (English, L1). One participant confirmed that the screen was easier to view from the first balcony by stating: “It was pretty easy for me to glance between the surtitles and the stage because of where I was seated, but for the audience sitting lower, it might've been more straining to glance between them” (English L1, 1st balcony centre) and another participant shared that they found the screen was too high to balance reading the surtitles and focus on the action on stage, but that they understood that it was necessary to place it higher up since there were projections that formed part of the stage set (Group 1, French L1).



Figure 13: Screen Dimensions for *Jean et Béatrice*

The surtitle screen for *Jean et Béatrice* was situated above a large backdrop screen which represented the apartment window of the stage set, as can be seen in the image above. The screen was significantly larger for this play than for the other two, measuring 16 feet 5 inches long and 3 feet wide. It was located slightly higher (1 foot 1.5 inches) than the screen for *La Corneille*, and lower (3 feet 7 inches) than the screen for *Le Destin tragi-comique de Tubby et Nottubby*. The top

of the screen was approximately 14 feet 5 inches from the stage floor, while the bottom of the screen was approximately 11 feet 5 inches from the floor. Using these measurements, it was calculated that the centre of the screen was at a height of 12 feet 11 inches. Again, this measurement was used to calculate the approximate viewing distance for audience members based on the front row and the back row (row 1 and row 5), using the estimated eye-height of 4 feet. The following diagram depicts the approximate viewing distances for this play.

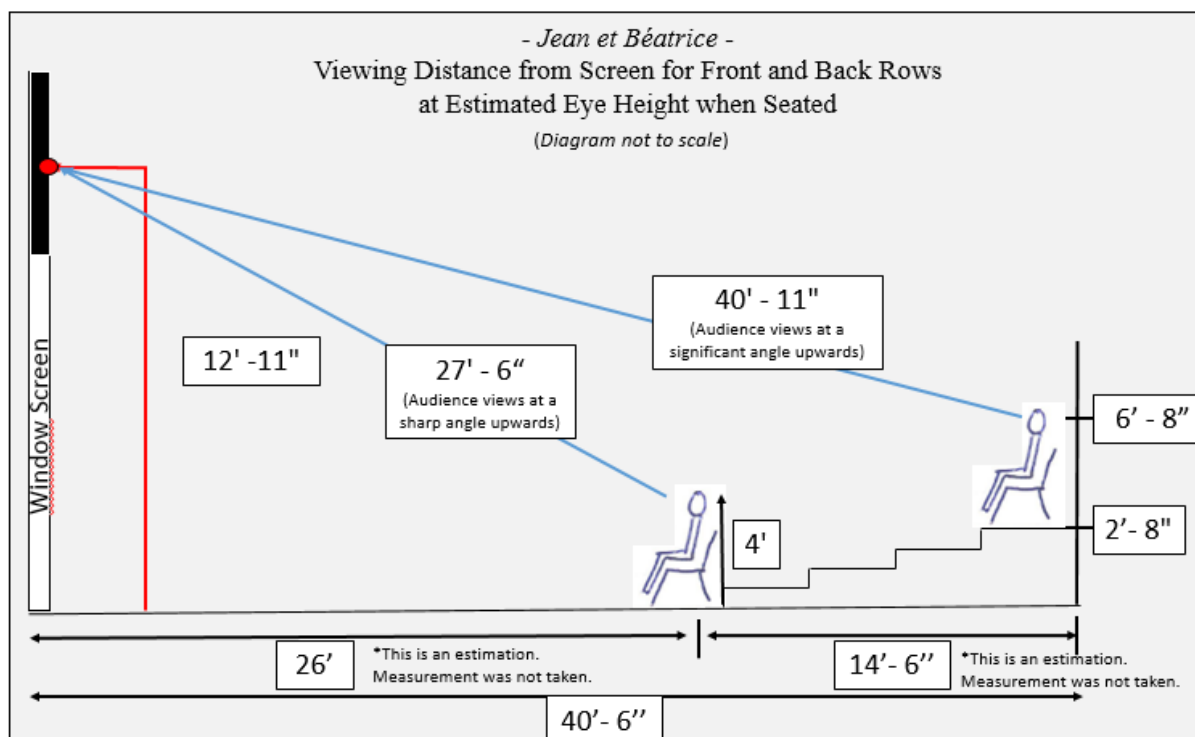


Figure 14: Viewing Distances from Seating Area to Surtitle Screen for *Jean et Béatrice*

The seating arrangement was different for *Jean et Béatrice*. The risers were much lower to the ground and there were only five rows facing the stage. The last row (row 5) was more than 6 feet lower than the last row (row 9) of the first two productions, resulting in a greater viewing distance and angle than for the first two productions. Additionally, there were two rows of seats placed along both sides of the stage (stage left and right). The first row on each side was at floor-level and the second rows were slightly raised. Audience members could therefore choose to see the performance from the side or facing the stage, although only two audience members who participated in this study chose to sit in these sections. These seating sections were extremely maladapted for the use of surtitles and it was not expected that participants who would use the

surtitles would sit in these sections. This diagram simply depicts the viewing distances for audience members who sat in rows 1-5.

A total of 90.7% of participants who *used* the surtitles stated that the position of the screen was “suitable”, whereas 9.3% stated that the position was “poor”. The participants for this play were even more dispersed in terms of where they sat that breaking down the percentages of those who rated the screen position as “suitable” or “poor” according to each specific seating section would result in extremely unreliable results. However, if we look at where participants were seated in the highest concentration (row 1, 4 and 5), we can note that the positive satisfaction rates are quite similar, with 88.9% of participants sitting in row 1, 87.5% in row 4 and 90.5% in row 5 rating the position of the screen as “suitable”. Among the total participants sitting in each section, 12.5% of those who rated the position as “poor” sat in row 1, 14.3% sat in row 4, and 9.4% in row 5. According to these results, we can notice that the position of the screen was rated as being poorer for rows 1 and 4 than for row 5, which aligns with the results from *Tubby et Nottubby*. The results seem to indicate once again that the position of the screen was most suitable the further up and farther away one sits from the stage.

There were four comments provided regarding the screen height for *Jean et Béatrice*, all of which were made by participants who sat in row 5 (the last row of the risers). One participant noted that they were “not sure how it could be improved but the location was at times not ideal” (English L1), whereas another stated that “the position of the screen was poor” and “would have been most suitable if [they] had sat in the balcony” (English, L1). Another two participants shared similar comments that were provided in the open-ended responses for *La Corneille*. One participant shared that “the higher seating area would have made it easier to read and see the action” (Other L1). The other provided even more detail, stating:

Although I said that the placement of the surtitles in relation to the actors was good, I think a better way to put it is that the position was the best it could be, but still not great. I found them to be too far away from the actors, so that if I wanted to read something off the surtitles, my focus had to be directed away from what was happening onstage, which I found pretty distracting (English L1).

During the focus group, one participant shared that “you get the same effect watching a surtitled theatre production as you would watching a subtitled movie.” Yet they brought up a notable disadvantage related to surtitles with regards to the distance between the stage and the screen: “I found that the distance between the two was so much that, like, with a movie, I can read the

subtitles and still kind of watch the movie, but with the surtitles, I had to pay attention to one or the other. I could not watch what the people [(actors)] were doing plus look all the way up at the surtitles.” This is an indication that the height of the screen and the need to shift one’s focus between the action on stage and the surtitles contributes to a split-attention effect, which is further discussed in section 4.2.b.1.

Of the participants who indicated that they *did not* use the surtitles, 100% rated the position of the screen as being “suitable”. Again, this leads to the conclusion that the surtitles were not a visual distraction for those audience members who did not need to use them. If we combine the results from both groups of participants (those who *used* and those who *did not use* the surtitles), an overall majority of 91% of participants rated the position of the screen as “suitable” and 9% rated it as being “poor”. Based on these overall results, it can be concluded that the surtitle screen for *Jean et Béatrice* was also suitable for the audience’s viewing needs

The overall results from all three plays for both groups of participants (those who *used* and *did not use* the surtitles) show that the position of the surtitle screen was rated as being “suitable” by the greater majority of participants for each play, with a response rate ranging from 83% to 91%.

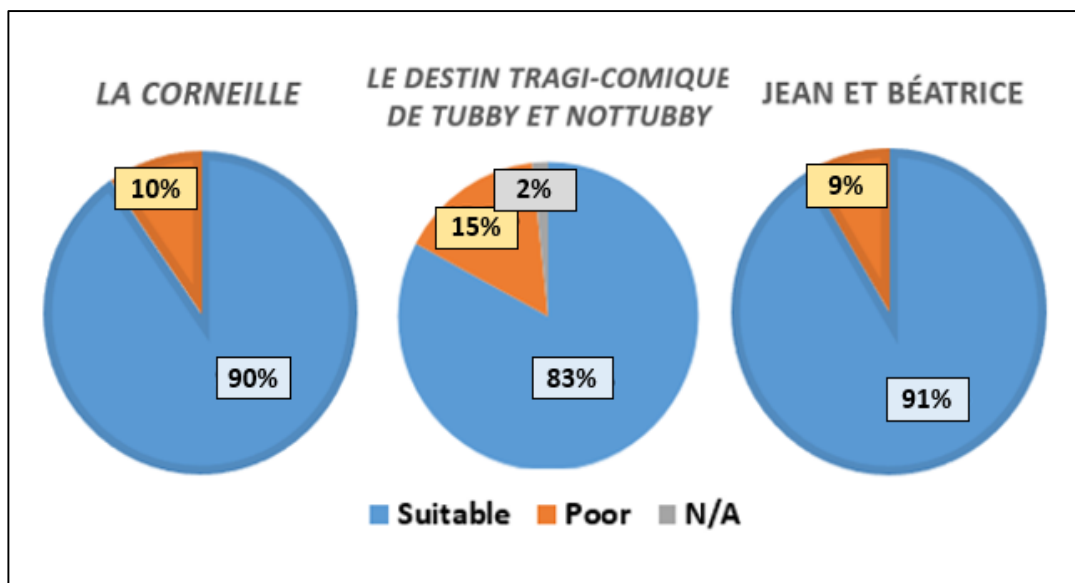


Figure 15: Participant Ratings for Screen Positioning Per Production

The position of the screens for *La Corneille* and *Jean et Béatrice* received very similar ratings, the latter screen position being rated 1% higher than the former. The screen position for *Tubby et Nottubby* was rated the least suitable, which is not surprising considering its height.

According to the qualitative results for all three plays, placing the screen lower to the stage so as to have the surtitles closer to the vicinity of the actors would improve the viewing experience by reducing the distance the eyes have to travel between the stage and the surtitles. However, this presents a dichotomy between the needs of the audience members who rely on the surtitles, the aesthetics of the set and the fact that the surtitles should not disturb audience members who do not need or want to use them. Placing the surtitles lower would surely be cause for distraction to those audience members who do not need to use the surtitles, and would also encroach upon the *mise-en-scène* of the production.

With the exception of *La Corneille*, there seemed to be somewhat of a trend indicating a higher rating of the screen position the higher up the participants were seated. While it has been made explicit that the results obtained through this study cannot serve to confirm the validity of the current assumption that the surtitles are best viewed with relation to the stage from further back and higher up due to the fact that the participants were not dispersed evenly among the seating sections, the results nevertheless do indicate that this is likely the case.

The results of the quantitative and qualitative analysis indicate that it is visually easier to focus on both the surtitle screen and the action on stage the higher up one sits, especially when the stage is at ground level as it is at *L'UniThéâtre*, since this reduces the angle and distance at which the eyes must travel.

4.2.a.2.) Format, Brightness, Typeface and Text Positioning

The surtitles for each production were formatted in the same manner. The background of the PowerPoint slides was monochrome black and the text colour was white. The surtitle screen for all three plays were painted black. The projected surtitles thus appeared as white text on a black screen. Below is an example of how the surtitles initially appeared on the PowerPoint slides for each performance.



Figure 16: Screen Shot of PowerPoint Slide 135 – *La Corneille*

While the surtitles for each production were formatted the same way in PowerPoint, the brightness of the text on the screen varied for each play due to technical factors such as projector type and stage lighting. Participants were asked to rate the colour and brightness of the surtitles. Of those who *used* the surtitles, 100% of the participants for *La Corneille* and *Tubby et Nottubby* rated them as suitable, whereas the colour and brightness only received a rating of 71% for *Jean et Béatrice*, with 29% of participants rating them as “too dark”.

	<i>La Corneille</i>	<i>Tubby et Nottubby</i>	<i>Jean et Béatrice</i>
Suitable	100%	100%	71%
Too Dark	0%	0%	29%
Too Light	0%	0%	0%
N/A	0%	0%	0%

Table 14: Participant Ratings of the Colour and Brightness of the Surtitles

The qualitative results that were collected through the open-response questions of the survey for this production consist of four comments regarding the brightness of the surtitle text. The following comment was made by a recruited participant from Group 3 who attended all three productions:

I found the surtitles to be generally bright enough, but because this particular play had a very prominent, brightly lit "window", the surtitles were comparatively less bright, which I did notice. That is, it's not that they were not bright enough, but the window made it harder to focus on the surtitles (English L1, Row 5).

As was explained in Chapter 3, section 3.4-c., the light which emitted from the large projection screen that depicted the view of the window interfered with the intensity of the surtitles for the performances of *Jean et Béatrice*. The light pollution was consistent to differing degrees, so the intensity of the projected images on the window backdrop changed throughout the performance. Regardless of their intensity, these projections reduced the brightness of the surtitles significantly

and made them appear quite dim. This can be confirmed by the following comment: “The text or contrast of the surtitle screen could have been brighter. It seemed a bit dull/dark and it would have made for easier reading if it was a touch brighter (English L1, 1st Balcony Centre). A different participant noted however that the “brightness of the text was too dark during some scenes only” (Other L1, Row 5), indicating that the reduced brightness of the surtitles may not have consistently affected the legibility of the surtitles through the duration of the performances.

The type of projector used for this performance also had a factor to play in the brightness of the surtitles. As we can see from the chart below, the projector used for *Jean et Béatrice* had a much lower light output, with only 3,200 lumens as opposed to the projector used for the first two productions, which had nearly double the lumens rating, and therefore a much higher capacity for light output. It also had a significantly lower contrast ratio, which also had an effect upon the quality of the brightness.

<i>La Corneille and Tubby et Nottubby</i>	<i>Jean et Béatrice</i>
Projector Type: Epson Powerlight Pro Model: G5350 Lumens: 6,000 Contrast: 5,000:1	Projector Type: NEC Model: MT1065 Lumens: 3,200 Contrast: 800:1

Table 15: Types of Projectors used to Display the Surtitles

The angle of the projector played an additional role in reducing the brightness of the surtitles. Because it was placed on an angle, the projector was set to a horizontal keystone of -15 and a vertical keystone of 34 to correct the projected image on the screen. This produced a keystone effect, which made the text on the left side of the screen appear slightly less bright than the text on the right side. Perhaps the surtitles would have appeared bright enough had the Epson Powerlight Pro also been used for *Jean et Béatrice* and if the projector had been located directly across from the screen, rather than on an angle.

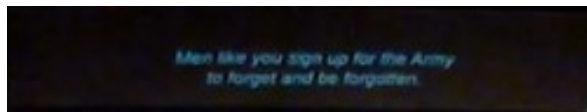
While it was expected that the colour and brightness would also be rated lower for *Tubby et Nottubby*, since the set lighting was quite dynamic and did interfere somewhat with the brightness of the text, according to the survey results, it seems that the surtitles were in fact bright enough for the audience. In addition, here were no comments made regarding the brightness or darkness of the surtitles in the open-response sections of the survey for *Tubby et Nottubby*, which may indicate that the brightness of the text was not an issue that affected anyone’s experience

enough to share about it. Perhaps the brightness was better than due to the higher light output of the projector used for this production, and perhaps the screen height also reduced the light interference by distancing the surtitles from the other sources of light on stage.

Screen-shots taken from the recordings that were made for each production show the difference in the brightness of the surtitles. It is important to note that the surtitles appeared clearer and brighter from the audience seating sections and that the quality of the images displayed below is due to the distance from the video recorder to the screen. The text on the surtitles screen for all three productions was much clearer than the what the below images depict. The GoPro video recorder that was used to record the performances was placed on the second balcony in front of the sound and lighting booth, directly across from the stage. There was more light pollution from this height as there was in the seating areas below, which make the surtitles appear lighter in the recordings than they were during the performances (but less so for *La Corneille*, since the minimal set lighting did not interfere as much with the quality of the recording).



La Corneille



Le Destin tragi-comique de Tubby et Nottubby



Jean et Béatrice

Figure 17: Screen Shots of Each Surtitles Screen to Show Difference in Brightness

Regardless, it is obvious how much the brightness changed for each production and this is mainly attributed to the difference in lighting levels on stage for each play. This is an interesting and important factor to keep in mind when displaying surtitles with standard projectors.

The lighting for *La Corneille* was simpler, making use of spot lights for each actor, while the lighting on the rest of the set was kept to a minimum. As mentioned previously, the lighting for *Tubby et Nottubby* was very dynamic, which slightly reduced the intensity of the text

brightness. The second “window” screen placed below the surtitle screen, as well as the type of projector, significantly reduced the brightness of the surtitles in the case of *Jean et Béatrice*, which affected the legibility of the surtitles and negatively impacted their reception to a certain extent.

Typeface and Distribution

The font chosen for the surtitles for all three plays was Arno Pro Caption. This decision was not based on past research at the time the surtitles were created. The font was simply chosen because it had been the font that had been used for the surtitles since their inception as part of the productions at *L’UniThéâtre* in 2008, when Shavaun Liss created the surtitles under the direction of Dr. Louise Ladouceur. One could say that the font has become part of the in-house practices applicable to the surtitles at *L’UniThéâtre*. As was seen in Chapter 2, section B, just as Karamitoglou (1998) proposes in his set of subtitling standards that “[t]ypefaces with no serifs are preferable to fonts with serifs” (n.p.) Bataillon et al. (2016) also specify in their *Guide du surtitrage au théâtre* that a sans-serif font with proportional spacing is preferable for reading short lines on a screen (p.25). Arno Pro Caption is a serif-type font, however despite this fact, its “optical sizing” helps “maintain the integrity and legibility of the [...] typespace design” (Strizver, 2007).

The font size chosen for *La Corneille* and *Jean et Béatrice* was 28 point, but although the screens for *La Corneille* and *Jean et Béatrice* were at similar heights, it is notable to explain that regardless of the surtitles being the same font size, the different sizes of screens and the different placements of the projectors resulted in the text size appearing differently when projected. The projector for *La Corneille* was hanging from the lighting pipe of the second balcony in front of the sound and lighting booth directly across from the stage, approximately 40 feet from the screen, whereas the projector for *Jean et Béatrice* was hanging from the lighting pipe on the right side of the second balcony (stage left), significantly closer to the stage at approximately 25 feet from the screen and on an angle. The fact that the projector was located much closer to the screen resulted in the text appearing quite a bit larger than the text for *La Corneille*. It also spanned a greater distance (horizontally, from left to right) relative to the stage because of the increased screen dimensions. The height of the screen for *Tubby et Nottubby* made it necessary to increase the font size to 32 point for greater ease of legibility. However, due to the height of the screen, the text

optically appeared relatively the same size as the text of the surtitles for *La Corneille* when projected.

We can see from the percentages below that the size of text for all three performances was rated nearly unanimously as “suitable” for all three productions based on those who *used* the surtitles, with *La Corneille* and *Jean et Béatrice* gaining the highest and identical ratings (98%) and *Tubby et Nottubby* receiving the lowest rating (96%), as well as the highest number of participants (4%) rating the text size as too small. It is not surprising that the text size was perceived as being smaller for this production, considering the increased height of the screen. While the more negative rating of *Tubby et Nottubby* with regards to text size may be attributed to the height of the screen, it is also possible that it could be attributed to the fact that the surtitles contained much less text than the other two productions. The text may have appeared smaller because optically, the surtitles took up little space in relation to the rest of the set, which occupied the entire back curtain.

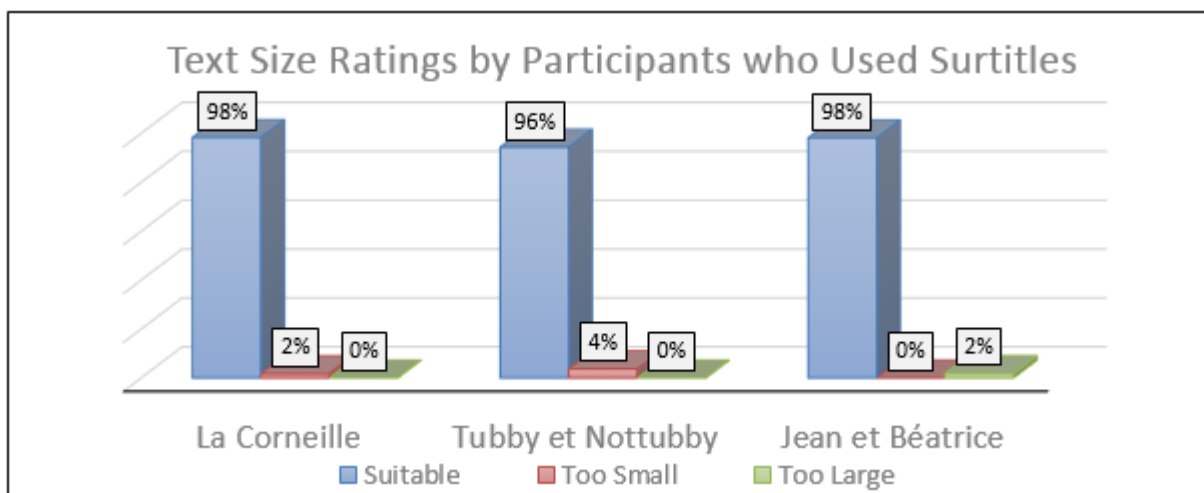


Figure 18: Text Size Ratings by Participants Who Used the Surtitles

These high rates of satisfaction reveal that the text size was appropriate and allowed for sufficient legibility of the surtitles regardless of the screen height for all three performances. No participants commented on the text size in the open-response sections of the surveys.

Text Positioning

Text positioning includes both text alignment – how the text is justified – as well as the text positioning on the surtitle screen. There was no definition provided in the survey question, so it is assumed that participants interpreted the question as entailing both aspects. Post-production, the position of the text was centre-aligned and centred at the bottom of the slides of the PowerPoint documents. However, at the rehearsal-stage, it was deemed necessary to adjust the positioning of the text (i.e. move the text lower on the PowerPoint slide), depending on the height of the screen. The justification of the text remained centre aligned for all surtitles.

The screen for *La Corneille* seemed to be at an appropriate height that did not require any adjustments to the text position. The surtitles therefore appeared at the centre of the surtitle screen. Having the text centred on the screen to balance the use of space may be the most visually and aesthetically pleasing, however when considering the accessibility of the surtitles, one must consider the audience's needs and this may mean that depending on the position of the screen, the position of the surtitles on the screen might need altering to ease the audiences' capacity to read them. Due to the heights of the screens, the surtitles for *Tubby et Nottubby* and *Jean et Béatrice* were both adjusted so that the text was placed closer to the bottom of the surtitle screen for each production. This decision was made for ease of legibility. In hindsight, the text positioning on the screen for *Tubby et Nottubby* could have been placed even lower. Due to the screen height and large dimensions, the text was positioned slightly lower on the screen for the performances of *Jean et Béatrice*.³⁷ A measurement was taken for the text positioning for this production: the bottom line of the surtitles was 4 ½ inches from the bottom of the screen. Two lines of text took up 1 foot 9 inches, leaving 6 ½ inches of blank screen above the text. Measurements were not taken for the other two productions.

The text positioning was rated 100% “suitable” by all participants who *used* the surtitles. Relatively few comments regarding the position of the text were made by participants in the open-response questions of the surveys, however one participant who attended a performance of *La Corneille* did make note that the “positioning of the text [on the] screen could be lowered a few inches so one's head movement isn't so pronounced” (Group 1, English L1, Row 1-5). Apparently, it may have also been beneficial to lower the surtitles on the screen for this production as well.

³⁷ Consult Figure 17 to view the screen shots that depict the brightness of the surtitles to observe how the text was positioned on each screen for each production.

4.2.a.3.) Line Distribution and Character Count

Recall from Chapter 2, section 2.2.a. that there are currently no fixed conventions for the number of characters per title and that the current body of research indicates that the number can range anywhere from 35 to 70 characters per line, or 70 to 140 characters per title. Additionally, while the general convention is that surtitles consist of one to two lines, surtitles can be up to three lines in length. A supposition is that longer surtitles (more than one line) can minimize the necessity of looking up to the screen and can help maximize the audience's ability to concentrate on the performance (Griesel, 2007).

Given the qualities of each production that were detailed in Chapter 3, sections 3.4 a., b. and c., the surtitles for each play were quite different. *La Corneille* was characterized by slower-paced lengthy monologues, as well as dialogues, and therefore consisted of mainly of two- and three-line surtitles. As we can see from the chart and table below, this production had the largest percentage of three-line surtitles. *Tubby et Nottubby* was characterized by short and rapid dialogues and therefore consisted of mainly one- and two-line surtitles and there were two instances where the dialogue exchange was so rapid, that it was deemed necessary to create two “split-dialogue” surtitles, as explained in section 3.4.b. Since *Jean et Béatrice* consisted for the most part of rapid dialogues, this resulted mainly in two-line surtitles. Additionally, there were several instances where the actors interrupted one another's speech, therefore a total of 22 surtitles consisted of “split-dialogues” to reproduce the effect of interruption.

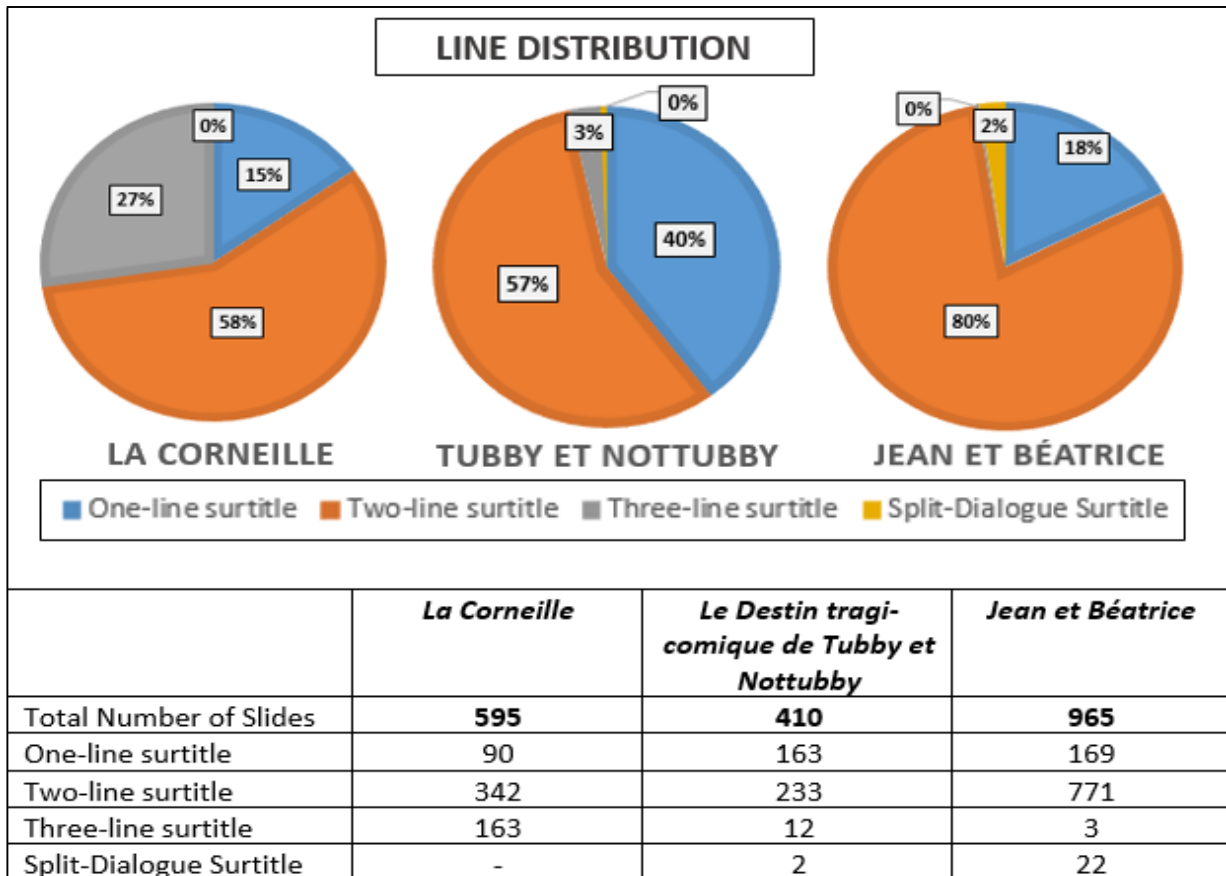


Figure 19: Line Distribution of the Surtitles for Each Production

Although the average character counts per one-, two- and three- line surtitles were all quite similar for all three productions, ranging from an average of 20 to 33 characters for one-line titles, 50-63 characters for two-line titles and 70 to 112 characters for three-line surtitles. These character counts fall within similar parameters as noted in the past research on surtitling. The surtitles for *La Corneille* comprised the largest amount of characters per title for one-, two- and three-line surtitles. The character counts for the one- and two-line titles for *Tubby et Nottubby* and *Jean et Béatrice* were relatively the same, while the three-line surtitles for *Tubby et Nottubby* had a significantly larger character count average than those for *Jean et Béatrice*; however, there were only a total of three three-line surtitles for this production as opposed to a total of 12 for *Tubby et Nottubby*. Since there were only two split-dialogue surtitles for *Tubby et Nottubby*, the average character count was not calculated for the split-dialogue titles for this production and therefore, this value does not appear on the graph below.

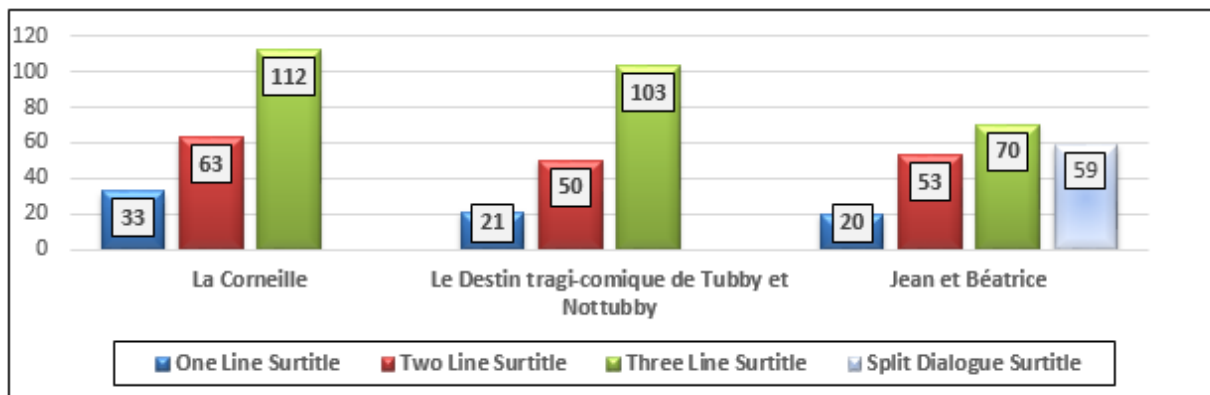


Figure 20: Average Character Counts Per One-Line, Two-Line and Three-Line Surtitles

Table 15, below, depicts the percentages of the total amount of time during which surtitles were displayed in proportion to the total approximate duration of each production. In relation to the duration of the performances and the amount of total time during which the surtitles were displayed, the surtitles were the most present during *La Corneille* and the least present for *Tubby et Nottubby*, although the low ratio for the latter production is due to the bilingual nature of the performance and the fact that there were no surtitles when English was spoken on stage. This already provides a portrait of which play consisted of more text. To gain an even further understanding of the density of the surtitles for each production, we can consider the total number of characters for all surtitles for each production in relation to the total amount of time the surtitles were displayed.

	La Corneille	Tubby et Nottubby	Jean et Béatrice
Total approximate amount of time surtitles were displayed	53 minutes	26 minutes	64 minutes
Total approximate duration of the performances	60 minutes	75 minutes	90 minutes
Percentage ratios for the amount of time that surtitles were displayed in relationship to the total duration of the performance	88%	35%	71%
Total amount of characters (all surtitles combined) including spaces and punctuation	41,937	16,465	45,857
Percentage ratios for the total amount of characters in relationship to the total amount of time the surtitles were displayed	84%	55%	76%

Table 15: Total Amount of Time Surtitles Were Displayed for Each Production

Combined, the surtitles for *Jean et Béatrice* had the highest number of characters, with 9% more characters than the surtitles for *La Corneille* and 64% more characters than those for *Tubby et Nottubby*. However, in ratio to the total amount of time the surtitles were displayed, the surtitles for *La Corneille* were actually the densest, followed by those for *Jean et Béatrice*, with *Tubby et Nottubby*'s surtitles being the least dense. When we consider the amount of time the surtitles were displayed, *La Corneille*'s surtitles had 10% more text than those for *Jean et Béatrice* and 34% more than those for *Tubby et Nottubby*, while the surtitles for *Jean et Béatrice* had 28% more text than those for *Tubby et Nottubby*.

Of course, this cannot provide an accurate measurement of the density of the text, because as mentioned in Chapter 2, section 2.2.a., previous research has shown that words are not read letter by letter (D'Ydewalle & Gielen, 1992; Moran, 2012) and other factors such as semantic and lexical coherence, syntax and line segmentation also facilitate the reading process. These calculations merely serve to provide a general picture of the amount of text displayed in the surtitles for each production.

Participants for each production were asked to rate the amount of text in the surtitles. According to participants who *used* the surtitles, *La Corneille* received the lowest rating, with 86% of participants rating the amount of text as “suitable” and 14% percent considering the surtitles as containing “too much text”. This is not surprising, given that the surtitles for this production contained the greatest number of characters per one-, two- and three-line surtitles and also consisted of the densest surtitles in relationship to the total duration of time the surtitles were displayed. However, the results for *Tubby et Nottubby* and *Jean et Béatrice* are somewhat contradictory.

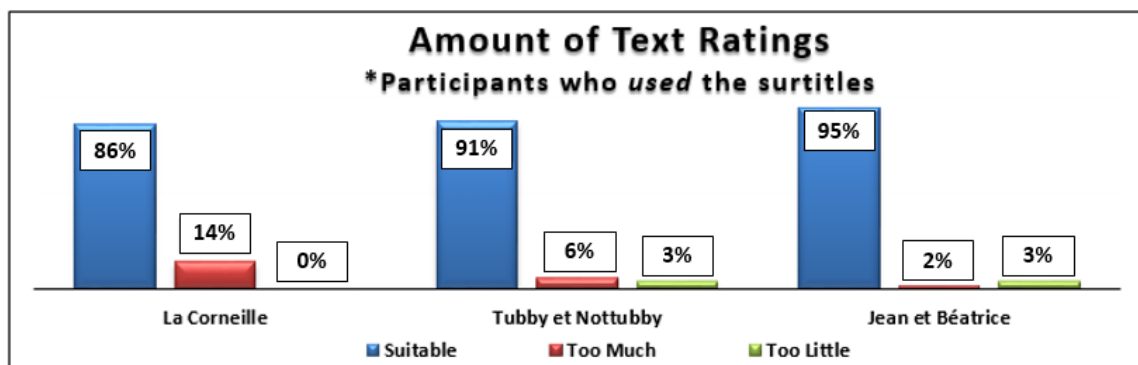


Figure 21: Participant Ratings of the Amount of Text Contained in the Surtitles

Overall, the one- and two-line surtitles for *Tubby et Nottubby* (21, 50) contained about the same average amount of characters as those for *Jean et Béatrice* (20, 53) and, as outlined in section 4.2.b.1 below, had the same average display times for one- and two-line surtitles. Additionally, as noted above, the surtitles for *Jean et Béatrice* had 28% more characters than those for *Tubby et Nottubby*. For these reasons, it is surprising that the amount of text was rated less suitable for *Tubby et Nottubby* and that a certain, albeit small, percentage of audience members considered there to be too much text. This play also had the largest number of participants who claimed that they did not have enough time to read the surtitles, with 6% of participants selecting this category which is unusual considering that there was more text in the surtitles for *Jean et Béatrice*.

However, we must note that two of the three participants who answered that they did not have enough time to read the surtitles for *Tubby et Nottubby* were either Francophone or had some knowledge of French. One proficient French-speaking participant (who rated their fluency in French as 9 on a Likert scale of 10) noted that they used the surtitles very little because the actors were speaking clearly in a French accent that they were used to (this participant from Group 3, Russian-Ukrainian L1, had lived in France for a number of years and the French spoken on stage was French of France). This participant also noted that because the actors were speaking quite quickly, they did not have the time, *nor the necessity* to read the surtitles. It seems that the fact that this participant understood both languages on stage was the principal reason for not reading the surtitles, rather than the issue of the speed of dialogue or the projection rate of the surtitles. The other participant with some knowledge of French (having rated their fluency in French as 5 on a Likert scale of 10) stated earlier on in the survey that they did make use of the surtitles, but in the field where participants provided the reason why they used or did not use the surtitles, this participant noted that they were: “Busy - transfixed by actors - didn't need to” which gives the impression that they in fact did not make much use of the surtitles by choice. In the field where participants explained their strategy for using the surtitles, this participant wrote: “I only looked when I wanted more clarity” (Group 3, German L1). Again, it would seem that it was not the speed of the dialogue nor the display times of the surtitles that affected this participant’s ability to read the surtitles, but rather their ability to understand both languages spoken on stage as well as the fact that they were captivated by the performance. The third participant who claimed they did not have enough time to read the surtitles was not quite as fluent in French, having rated their

fluency as 4 on a Likert scale of 10, and had noted earlier in the survey that the surtitles contained “too much” text. This participant expressed that it was “kind of hard” to read the surtitles because “it was easy to get lost” (Group 2, English L1). This participant clearly did have difficulty keeping up with the pace of the surtitles, whereas the other two participants claimed that they did not read the surtitles by choice. When taking note of these comments, we can see that the percentage of participants who used the surtitles consistently and who truly did not have enough time to read the surtitles due to the amount of text, the speed of the dialogue and/or the display time of the surtitles was actually 2% rather than 6%.

It is also important to keep in mind that different participants participated in the study for each performance, which has an effect upon the consistency of the results.

4.2.b.) Temporal Parameters (Duration)

Comparing the average display times with regard to the amount of characters provides a more nuanced portrait of the demand that was imposed on the audience members when it comes to reading time and allows us to gain a clearer understanding of the audience’s overall perception of the amount of text contained in the surtitles. This section provides an analysis of the average display times, the audience’s responses regarding their ability to read the surtitles, their re-reading tendencies, as well as their ability to focus their attention on stage.

Recall from Chapter 2, section 2.2.b. that temporal parameters for the field of subtitling include the exposure time of one- and two-line titles, and single-word titles, as well as lead-in and lead-out times, and lag time between two consecutive subtitles (Karamitroglou, 1998) and that the subtitling rules for minimum and maximum display times, as well as lead-in and lead-out times, do not apply to theatre surtitling (Griesel, 2007). While two-line surtitles are the most common, surtitles can consist of one-, two- or three-lines. While there are currently no specified minimum display times for surtitles, surtitles seem to intuitively last for at least 2 to 3 seconds (2005; 2007). There are also no established maximum display times (Griesel, 2005); the duration of a surtitle can vary significantly, from 1-20 seconds (2007). In Chapter 2, the researcher argued that it is not possible to establish fixed and definitive display times for surtitles, since surtitles will always be regulated by the speed of speech delivered on stage and this can vary from one performance to the next. It is also important to keep in mind that the audiences’ literacy levels,

their familiarity with the ST language and the genre of the performance are all factors which make it difficult to establish rules regarding reading time, and thus, display times (Ivarsson & Carroll, 1998).

4.2.b.1.) Display Time, Amount of Text, and Reading Time

As noted in Chapter 3, section 3.3.a., the display times were calculated manually and as a result, they are not 100% accurate, although only by a small margin. As the results in the graph below indicate, the average display times for one-line surtitles were quite similar for all three productions, ranging from 2.6 seconds for *Jean et Béatrice*, to 2.8 seconds for *Tubby et Nottubby*, to 3 seconds for *La Corneille*.

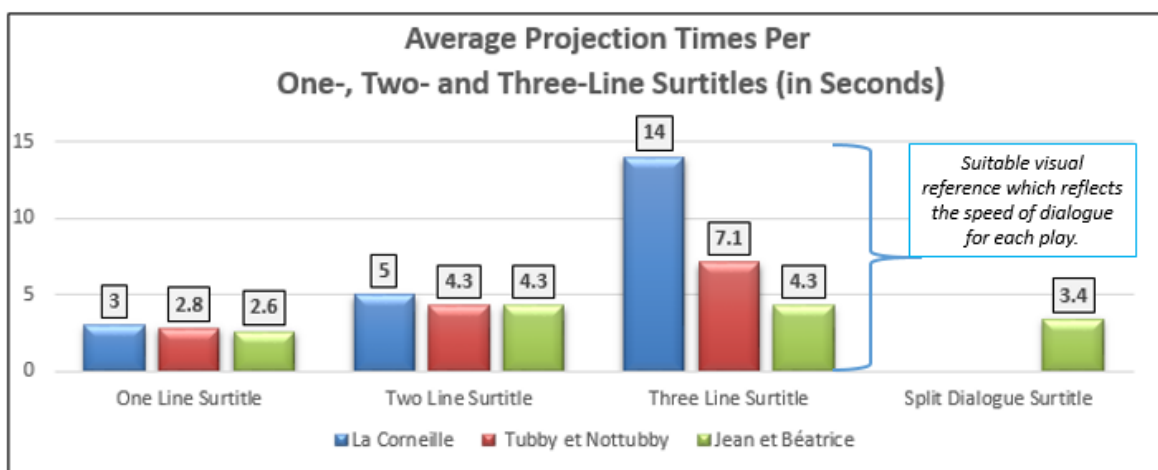


Figure 22: Average Display Times Per One-, Two- and Three-Line Surtitles

The minimum and maximum Display times for one-line surtitles for all three plays were as follows:

	<i>La Corneille</i>	<i>Tubby et Nottubby</i>	<i>Jean et Béatrice</i>
Minimum Display Time	2	1	1
Maximum Display Time	5.5	9.7	5

Table 16: Minimum and Maximum Display Time (Seconds) for One-Line Surtitles

We can note that the range of display times are quite broad, and that the minimum display time was extremely short in some instances, amounting to only one second. Projecting a surtitle for such a short amount of time may not allow the audience enough time to read it. Past research on subtitling has revealed that displaying a brief, single word subtitle for less than a second and a half imposes the risk of appearing “as a mere flash on the screen” which might “irritat[e] the viewers’ eye” (Karamitroglou, 1998, n.p.) or “that they eye will not register it at all” (Ivarsson & Carroll, 1998, p. 64). However, the rate at which one-line surtitles were displayed for one second is extremely low for all three performances; in other words, it was not a frequent occurrence, and the frequency at which it did happen changed from performance to performance, reflecting the dynamic nature of the rhythm and pace of the dialogue of theatrical performances. For instance, out of the three performances of *Tubby et Nottubby*, the number of one-line surtitles which contained more than one single word were displayed for one second at the following frequency:

Performance Date	Number of One-Line Surtitles Displayed for One Second	Rate According to Total Number of One-Line Slides (90)	Number of Characters Per Surtitle
January 30, 2015	1	1%	14
January 31, 2015	2	2%	13; 12
February 1, 2015	5	6%	23; 7; 4; 17; 23

Table 17: Frequency of One-Line Surtitles Displayed for One Second (*Tubby et Nottubby*)

The display times were analyzed for one single performance of *Jean et Béatrice*. Out of a total of 169 one-line surtitle slides for this play, only 5% of these were displayed for one second.

The average display times for the two-line surtitles were also very similar for all three productions: those for *Tubby et Nottubby* and *Jean et Béatrice* were displayed for an average of 4.3 seconds, while those for *La Corneille* were displayed slightly longer, at 5 seconds in length (Figure 22, above). The minimum and maximum display times for the two-line surtitles are represented below:

	<i>La Corneille</i>	<i>Tubby et Nottubby</i>	<i>Jean et Béatrice</i>
Minimum Display Time	1	2	1
Maximum Display Time	12	11	14

Table 18: Minimum and Maximum Display Times (Seconds) for Two-Line Surtitles

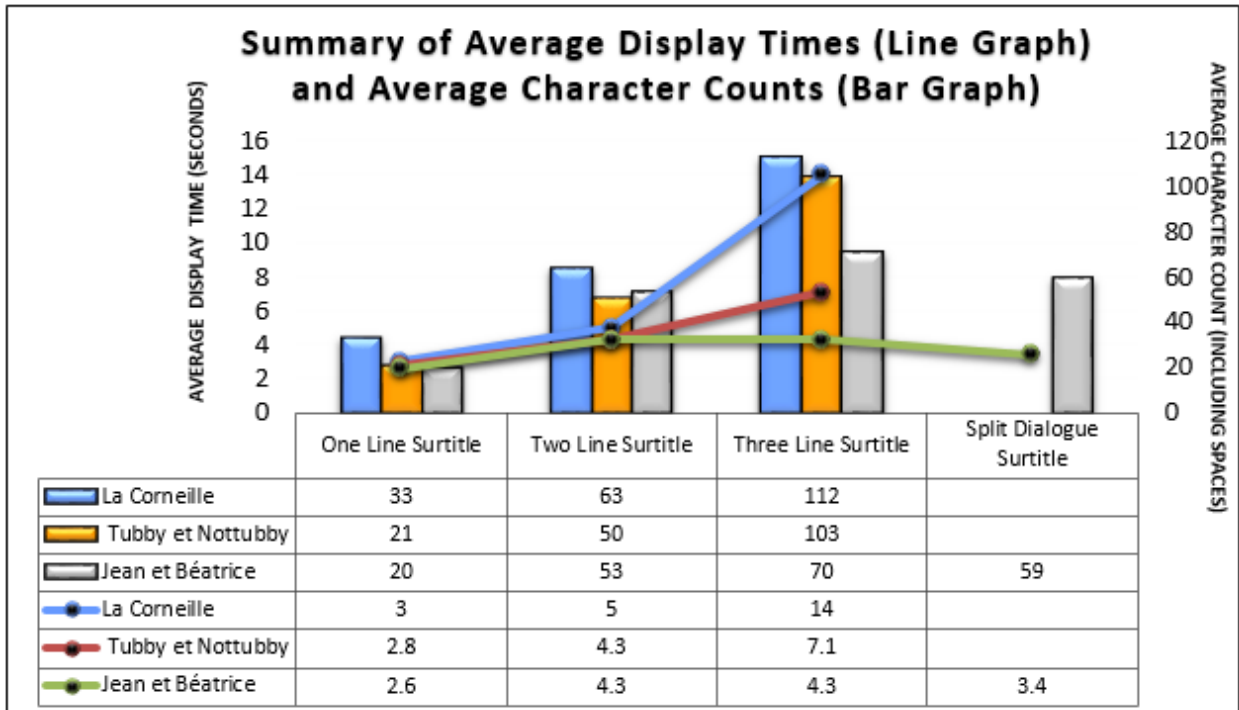
Once again, the rate at which two-line surtitles were displayed at the minimum display times displayed above is quite small considering the total number of two-line surtitle slides for each performance. In the case of *La Corneille*, analyzing the projection rates of four performances, there was only one occurrence of a two-line surtitle being displayed for a duration of one second. The same was the case for *Jean et Béatrice*, however the rate at which two-line surtitles were displayed for two seconds is significantly larger for *Tubby et Nottubby*. According to the analysis of three performances, the total number of two-line surtitles that were displayed for two seconds amounted to an average of 11% of the total amount (234) of two-line surtitles for this production., yet it is important to remember that the two-line surtitles for *Tubby et Nottubby* contained the lowest amount of average characters of all three productions.

The analysis revealed a larger range of display times for three-line surtitles. Figure 22 provides an appropriate visual representation of the speed of dialogue for each play – *La Corneille* consisting of the longest rate of projection at an average of 14 seconds, and *Jean et Béatrice* of the fastest, at 4.3 seconds (although recall that there were only three three-line surtitles for this production), with an average display time of 7.1 seconds for *Tubby et Nottubby*. The minimum and maximum display times for the three-line surtitles for all three productions were as follows:

	<i>La Corneille</i>	<i>Tubby et Nottubby</i>	<i>Jean et Béatrice</i>
Minimum Display Time	2	2	3
Maximum Display Time	16	14	7

Table 19: Minimum and Maximum Display Times (Seconds) for Three-Line Surtitles

Once again, the trend is the same for the minimum display times of the three-line surtitles: the rates at which the three-line surtitles were displayed for these extremely short display times are very low in comparison to the total number of three-line surtitles displayed for each performance.



**Figure 23: Summary of Average Display Times (Seconds)
and Average Character Counts**

In summary, the display times for one-line surtitles were rather similar for all three plays, at around three seconds on average. *La Corneille*, having the most text, had the highest amount of average characters per one-line surtitle at 33 characters, while *Tubby et Nottubby* and *Jean et Béatrice* had nearly the same average at 21 and 20 characters per one-line surtitle. Two-line surtitles were also displayed at similar rates for all three performances at an averages of 4.5 seconds for *Tubby et Nottubby* and *Jean et Béatrice* and for an average of 5 seconds for *La Corneille*, again with two-line surtitles for *La Corneille* having the highest average character count with an average of 63 characters. *Tubby et Nottubby* and *Jean et Béatrice* had quite similar average character counts per two-line surtitle, with averages of 50 and 53 characters. There was the largest discrepancy of display times between each play for three-line surtitles. Those for *La Corneille* were displayed on average for about twice as long as those for *Tubby et Nottubby* at an average of 14 seconds, and over three times longer than those for *Jean et Béatrice*, which were displayed for an average of 4.3 seconds).

In order to further nuance which production was the most demanding in terms of text density with regard to how long the surtitles were displayed, the approximate reading speeds for

each type of surtitle (one-, two-, three-line, and split-dialogue) were calculated³⁸. Recall from Chapter 3, section 3.3.a. that the approximate reading speeds for each type of surtitle (one-, two-, three-line, and split-dialogue) were calculated based on the following established subtitling norm: 2 lines = 80 characters = 5 1/3 seconds, which results in a reading speed of around 175wpm (Ivarsson & Carroll, 1998, p.67).

Determining the display times in terms of reading speed (words per minute) provides a slightly more refined portrait of the display times for each play.

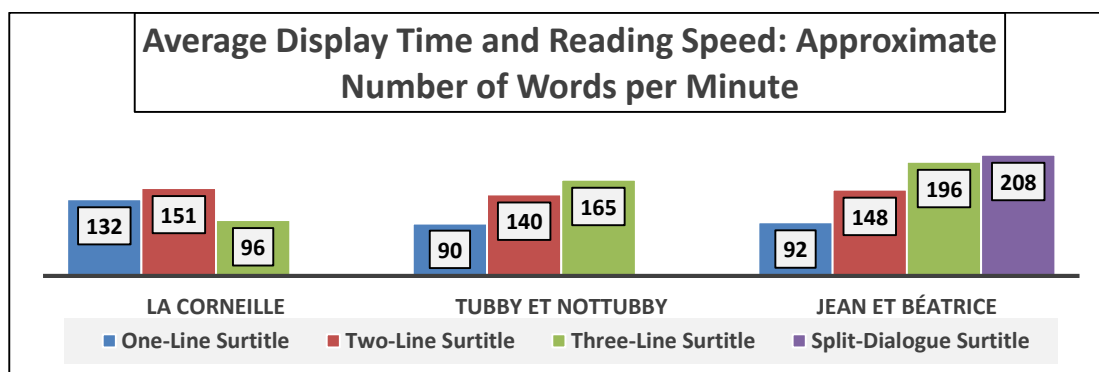


Figure 24: Average Display Time and Reading Speed

From these numbers we can see that the one-line surtitles for *La Corneille* were displayed at the highest number of words per minute (132), almost half times greater than the one-line surtitles for *Tubby et Nottubby* and *Jean et Béatrice*, which were both displayed at virtually the same rate of words per minute (90 and 92wpm).

The words per minute rate for two-line surtitles was quite similar for all three productions, ranging from 140 to 151wpm, with the surtitles for *La Corneille* being displayed at the highest number of words per minute. These results are consistent with the measurements included in section 4.2.a.3., Table 15, which indicate that *La Corneille* had the highest total amount of characters in relationship to the total duration of time the surtitles were displayed.

However, the three-line surtitles for *La Corneille* had the lowest number of words per minute; the display times were longer for three-line surtitles than those for the other two productions. The display times, in terms of words per minute, were quite similar for one- and

³⁸ It is important to remember that the character counts (as displayed in Figure 23, above) that were calculated for each surtitle include spaces and punctuation.

two-line surtitles for *Tubby et Nottubby* and *Jean et Béatrice*, while the three-line surtitles for the latter production were displayed at a higher word per minute rate than the former, meaning that these surtitles required faster reading times.

Summary of Display Times of the Surtitles for <i>La Corneille</i>, <i>Tubby et Nottubby</i> and <i>Jean et Béatrice</i>				
Number of Lines	# of characters per surtitle	Minimum Display Time	Maximum Display Time	Reading Speed (wpm)
One	20-23	2 seconds	7 seconds	90-132
Two	50-63	2 seconds	15 seconds	140-151
Three	70-112	3 seconds	16 seconds	96-165* * <i>Jean et Béatrice</i> excluded ³⁹

Table 20: Summary of Display Times of All Productions

Lastly, we notice that the split-dialogue surtitles for *Jean et Béatrice* were displayed at the highest number of characters per second at an average of 208wpm; recall that there were 22 split-dialogue surtitles. This means that this type of surtitle was displayed for the shortest amount of time with regards to the number of characters contained in the surtitles. This is a high reading speed, considering the average reading speed ranges between 150-180wpm.

Looking at the display times in this manner, we might assume that *La Corneille* would be rated as being the most difficult to read out of all three productions and come to the conclusion that *Tubby et Nottubby* and *Jean et Béatrice* would be rated similarly in terms of the audiences' ability to read the surtitles. In order to determine whether this was the case, we can compare these results with the participants' responses with respect to whether they had enough time to read the surtitles.

³⁹ This is because there were only three 3-line surtitles for *Jean et Béatrice*

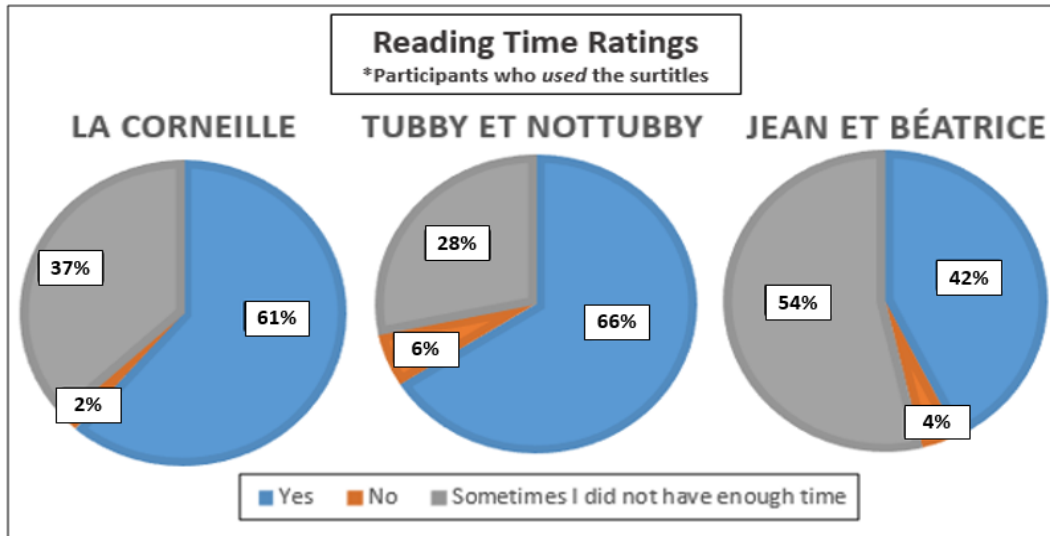


Figure 25: Reading Time Ratings for Participants Who Used the Surtitles

According to the participants' responses, the production for which the surtitles were most difficult to read was not *La Corneille*, but rather *Jean et Béatrice*, with the lowest rate of participants who used the surtitles claiming they were able to read all of the surtitles, at a rate of 42%, while 54% of participants indicated that they occasionally did not have sufficient time to read the surtitles. These results indicate that the participants had the most difficulty keeping up with the pace of the surtitles for *Jean et Béatrice*. However, this may be due to factors other than the density of the surtitles and the display times. There were several comments made by participants citing the reduced brightness of the text, the amount and speed of dialogue, and the lively action on stage as factors which required increased effort to share one's attention between the stage and the screen. In addition, the fact that there were 22 split-dialogue surtitles displayed at an average of 208wpm, may have been an additional factor.

La Corneille had the next lowest rating, with 61% of participants able to read all of the surtitles. In the case of *La Corneille*, 37% of participants who used the surtitles claimed that at times, they did not have enough time to read the surtitles, whereas only 28% of participants for *Tubby et Nottubby* indicated that this was the case. Among all three plays, *Tubby et Nottubby* had the highest rate of participants who claimed they were able to read all of the surtitles, at a rate of 66%, but also had the highest rate of participants who claimed they did not have enough time to read all of the surtitles. The same issue occurred with the responses to this question as it did for the question asking participants to evaluate the amount of text contained in the surtitles: the same two participants, one Francophone, the other with knowledge of French, did not need to use the

surtitles consistently which is why they did not read all of the surtitles. If we remove these erroneous responses, the number of participants who did not have time to read all of the surtitles drops to 2%. In this sense, *Tubby et Nottubby* seemed to have best facilitated the audiences' reading experience overall, although for the surtitles to be at their optimum reception capacity, it would be better to see results in the 90% range, rather than the 60% range, which means that perhaps the surtitles contained too much text for all productions. However, it is also important to note that the criteria "sometimes" is highly ambiguous; participants could have missed one or two surtitles and chosen this category.⁴⁰ According to the participants' comments further below, it can be assumed that this was in fact the case.

With the change in percentage to the results for *Tubby et Nottubby*, *Jean et Béatrice* had the highest rating for participants who did not have enough time to read the surtitles, at a rate of 4%. Although, once again there seems to be a discrepancy between participants not reading the surtitles by choice, and those not being able to read them because of the amount of text, the speed of the dialogue or the display time. In the case of *Jean et Béatrice* all of the participants who selected this answer were Francophone and specified that they did not need to have recourse to the surtitles at all times. Taking this into consideration, the percentage that more accurately reflects the amount of participants who did not have enough time to read the surtitles is in fact 0% for this production.

Lastly, *La Corneille* had the lowest rate, at 2% of participants. This time the percentage seems accurate, since the single participant who selected this answer did express that the surtitles also contained too much text (Group 1, English L1). According to the comment provided by this participant regarding their strategy for reading the surtitles, they experienced difficulty balancing their focus on the action on stage and reading the surtitles, often having to sacrifice the former for the latter: "I really wanted to pick upon some of the French dialogue but to do so I would often have to sacrifice reading all of the surtitles. Eventually, I would often listen to the end of the dialogue and then read the surtitle. I feel bad that in the process of understanding the dialogue I had to sacrifice seeing nuances in action and expression visually" (Group 1, English L1). If this participant waited to hear the end of the actor's dialogue while watching the actors prior to reading the surtitles, then surely they would not have had time to read all of the surtitles since they were

⁴⁰ One participant suggested including the option "most of the time" (ENGLISH, Group 3), which would add more selection for accuracy.

synched with the dialogue, appearing when the actor started speaking, and disappearing at the end of the speech that was relevant to the surtitle.

A total of 14 comments were made with regard to reading the surtitles in the open-response sections of the surveys, with a total of nine comments provided for *La Corneille*, one comment for *Tubby et Nottubby* and four comments for *Jean et Béatrice*.

The comments provided by participants who saw a performance of *La Corneille* reveal a range of perceptions; some participants were able to read easily, but others had more difficulty reading and focusing their action on stage. Among the participants who found the amount of text in the surtitles for *La Corneille* to be favourable, a regular *L'UniThéâtre* patron noted that “the [surtitles] for this play were the easiest to read yet” (English L1, French fluency 8). Another participant noted that they “really liked the amount of text on the screen” because even though “[t]here was quite a bit, [...] this maximized [their] ability to read and then watch the action on the stage” (English L1, French fluency 1). According to this participant, “smaller blocks of text [...] would probably have been more distracting as [they] wouldn’t have been able to watch the stage as much” (*ibid*). However, there were participants who viewed the amount of text as less favourable and who would have preferred less text. One participant noted that they found that it was almost impossible to listen and read together, because the actors were speaking too quickly, explaining that: “[s]hort surtitles were easy to read quickly, so [their] attention could be better focused on the action. If the titles were too long, [they] would end up reading and listening, but not really watching” (English L1, French fluency 6). Another participant explained that they thought it would have been necessary to limit the length of the surtitles as there were moments where there was a bit too much text (French L1, French fluency 10). This same participant noted that they would have preferred if the surtitles were left on the screen a while longer after the end of the actor’s speech:

Bien entendu je ne prends pas en compte les fois où l'actrice parle vite mais plus a des moments où, après sa phrase, l'actrice marque une pause et dès la fin du dernier mot, le texte disparaît des sur-titres pour afficher un écran noir. J'aurai préféré que le texte soit présent un peu plus longtemps dans ces cas-là.

An additional comment was made with regard to the display time of the surtitles, with a participant commenting that if the surtitles “were left a little longer on the screen it would have been better” (English L1, French fluency 8). Three participants commented that they are fast

readers and therefore, had no problems reading the surtitles, however they also noted that they wondered whether audience members who were slower readers would have had time to manage reading the surtitles, while still being able to focus their action on stage. This was obviously the case for some audience members, yet merely on certain occasions, rather than throughout the entire performance. This is reflected in the following comment: “There were a couple of times were I couldn’t read the entire surtitle without disrupting the degree of attention I was giving to the stage” (English L1, French fluency 3). Another participant expressed that in general, they were able to read the surtitles, but there were certain moments where it was not possible to manage to both read the surtitles and pay attention to the actors:

There was only one point in the play when I wasn't able to keep up with the surtitles and the action on stage at the same time. It was for 3 slides, it was too much text and they went too quickly. Otherwise, it worked perfectly and enhanced my understanding of the play (English L1, French fluency 7).

As we see, certain participants were able to manage reading the surtitles while devoting their attention to the action on stage, albeit some instances where the text was too dense for the length of time a surtitle was displayed. However, for some participants, the reading process may have been more challenging. One participant indicated that they were able to read all of the surtitles, but according to the comment below, this was clearly in detriment to the amount of attention they could focus on the actors:

The primary thing I noticed, which sums up my experience, was that I spent a lot of time reading the surtitles instead of watching the play. I couldn't relax and just watch, I had to concentrate on reading the surtitles. [...] They made things easier because I could understand the play, but I couldn't really watch in the way I am used to (English L1, French Fluency 1).

Lastly, another participant who indicated they could read all of the surtitles stated that:

While the quality of the show was good, I found myself not invested in the characters as much as I usually am when watching plays. I think this came from reading the surtitles and then missing the interaction between the characters on stage.[...] The actress who played the mother talked slower than the other two actors, and I was able to read the surtitles quickly and then watch her finish her thought/acting moment onstage. I think because of this, I found her the most interesting (English L1, French fluency 3).

During the focus group, when asked whether or not the surtitles created a disconnection from the play, in terms of not being as immersed in the performance due to switching back and forth between surtitles and stage, one participant noted that “there is a little bit of disconnect because it’s like...looking at your phone...a distraction like that. Obviously it’s not the same, but there is

-every time you look up[,] you kind of lose what's going on on stage." Another participant emphasized that the "actors transmit through their actions, but also through their words" and that the need to divide one's vision between the stage and screen leads to having to prioritize one aspect (surtitles) over the other (actor's actions). As mentioned in section 2.4., this phenomenon is referred to as the "split-attention" effect. In section 4.2.a.1., it was noted that the height of the surtitle screen from the stage seems to influence the degree to which the audience's attention is divided between the textual information (the surtitles) and the visual information (the performance). According to the overall results and comments, participants generally had enough time to read the surtitles, however as evidenced above, the amount of text and the short display times did cause some hindrance to the reception of the performance for some participants, detracting their attention from the stage, and at times, requiring too much of their attention and for some, all of their attention. The one comment made with regard to reading the surtitles for *Tubby et Nottubby* is of the same nature: "I wish there could be an innovative way to read the surtitles without missing the actions on stage" (Group 2, English L1).

The few comments provided by participants who saw a performance of *Jean et Béatrice* indicate that at times, there was too much text and it was "occasionally difficult to keep up", especially when the dialogue was spoken rapidly on stage (Other L1, French fluency 5; English L1, French fluency 1). One participant explained that short surtitles allow them to "read quickly and then glance down to the performers to take in the action of the scene" (English L1, French fluency 2). However, another participant commented that they "would have liked to have seen more text per slide (combine a few into one)" as this participant "found it more disruptive to have [the] surtitles change quickly" (English L1, French fluency 3).

In order to gain further insight into which production's surtitles were easiest to read, the participants from Group 3 were asked to indicate which of the three surtitles were easiest to read and explain why. Most participants found the surtitles for *La Corneille* easiest to read, for a total of 43%, while 33% thought the surtitles for *Tubby et Nottubby* were easiest to read and only 23% found so for the surtitles for *Jean et Béatrice*. The reasons cited for *La Corneille*'s surtitles being easiest to read were various. Most participants cited reasons such as the fact that the set was simple and the action on stage was more stationary, making it easier to focus on both the surtitles and the action; the text being more concise and faithful with the dialogue and action on stage/better timed surtitles; and the speed of speech being slower. The reasons cited for the

surtitles being easiest to read for *Tubby et Nottubby* include the audience member’s seating position; the amount of text; and the brightness and position of the text.

In hopes of gaining a better understanding as to audiences’ ability to read the surtitles for each play with regards to their display times, participants were also asked to rate the frequency at which they re-read the surtitles. The charts below depict the re-reading rates based on the responses provided by the participants who *used* the surtitles.

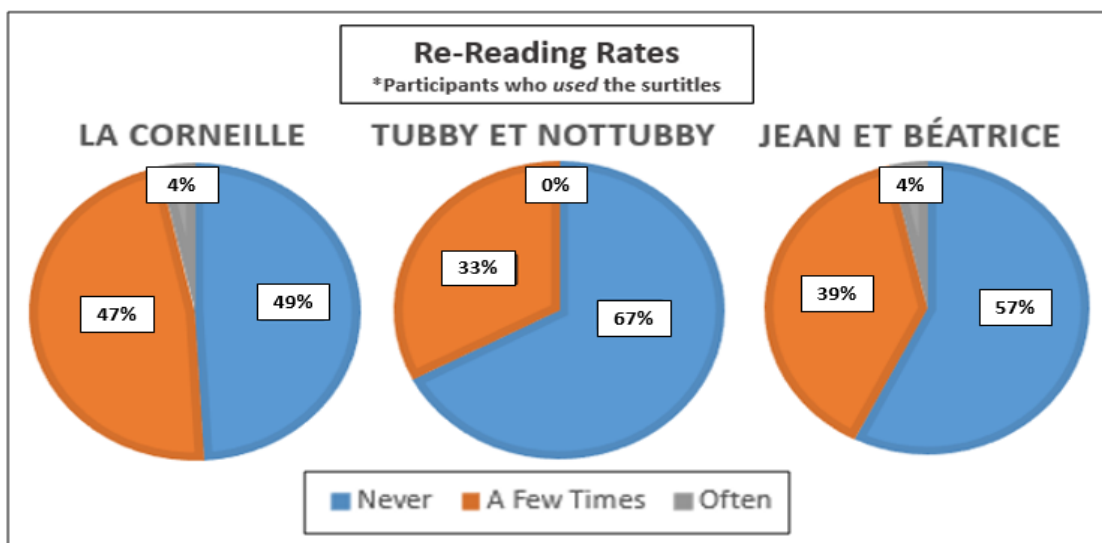


Figure 26: Re-Reading Rates for Participants Who Used the Surtitles

It was assumed that the longer the display times, the more participants would have had a tendency to re-read the surtitles. If *Tubby et Nottubby* was rated the highest in terms of the participants’ having sufficient time to read the surtitles, then it would be most logical that the largest number of participants would have indicated that they re-read the surtitles “often” or “a few times” for this production. However, *La Corneille* actually received the highest ratings for participants who re-read the surtitles a “few times”. This may be due to the fact that the simple set design, minimal action on stage, and the pace of the dialogue resulted in less elements to focus one’s attention on. These results serve to support that the extent to which participants were unable to read all of the surtitles was minimal; if the participants truly had difficulty reading the surtitles, audience members would not have had the time to re-read the surtitles.

It is important to bear in mind that the participants were not the same for all three productions. Having different participants for each production means that the participants’ reading abilities and tendencies do not remain consistent for each survey. The second factor is the

participants’ subjective recollections of their ability to read the surtitles, coupled with the amount of time that elapsed between the time during which the participants saw the play and subsequently answered the survey. Some participants answered the survey the same evening or the day after the performance they attended, while other participants completed the survey up to six days following the performance. In a regulated study, the participants would remain the same for all three productions and the surveys would be completed by participants immediately after the performance seen. However, since this was a study that occurred in a natural setting, it was not possible to ensure such study parameters. Another important factor to bear in mind with regards to the accuracy of these results, as mentioned, is the ambiguity of the answer choices. “Sometimes”, “a few times” and “often” are all parameters of frequency that can be subjective and interpreted differently. With such parameters, it is impossible to ensure accuracy.

4.2.b.2.) Segmentation and Synchronization

In order to evaluate the segmentation of the surtitles, the participants were asked to rate how easy it was to link the surtitles with the correct speaker on stage. Most participants who used the surtitles indicated they succeeded “easily” at linking the correct lines with the speaker on stage, with 75% of participants for *La Corneille*, and 63% for both *Tubby et Nottubby* et *Jean et Béatrice*. The remaining participants indicated that they succeeded “reasonably well”, meaning there must have been instances where they were not able to link the surtitles to the appropriate speaker. There were no participants who indicated having had difficulty linking the surtitles to the dialogue on stage. According to these overall results, the surtitles for *La Corneille* were the easiest to follow with the dialogue, having received the highest rating.

I succeeded at linking the lines with the right speaker on stage...	<i>La Corneille</i>	<i>Tubby et Nottubby</i>	<i>Jean et Béatrice</i>
...easily	75%	63%	63%
...reasonably well	25%	37%	37%
...with difficulty	0%	0%	0%

Table 21: Participants’ Ability to Link the Surtitles with the Correct Speaker on Stage (Participants who used the surtitles)

Both groups of participants – those who indicated they succeeded “easily” at linking the surtitles to the dialogue on stage, and those who succeeded “reasonably well” – were analyzed by language group (English L1, French L1, French and English L1, Other L1) in order to determine whether or not there was a relation between language and their ability to follow along with the surtitles. Each language group was further analyzed according to the participants’ self-rated French-language fluency.

PRODUCTION	LA CORNEILLE		TUBBY ET NOTTUBBY		JEAN ET BÉATRICE	
Ability to link surtitles to dialogue	Easily	Reasonably Well	Easily	Reasonably Well	Easily	Reasonably Well
Fluency Rating						
(1-5)	50%	43%	52%	74%	29%	65%
(6-10)	50%	57%	48%	26%	71%	35%

Table 22: Participants’ Ability to Link the Surtitles with the Correct Speaker on Stage (Participants who used the surtitles) According to French-Language Fluency

The fluency rates above include a relatively proportional number of French L1 and French and English L1 participants to English L1 participants. There was no consistent trend showing a correlation between the participants’ first languages and French-language fluency and their responses to this question. As we can note from the table above, the number of participants for *La Corneille* who self-rated their French-language fluency anywhere between 1-5 (*not at all fluent*) was reasonably proportional to the amount of participants who self-rated their fluency anywhere between 6-10 (*fluent*) for each category (“easily” and “reasonably well”). For this production, 57% of participants who chose the selection “reasonably well” had self-rated their French fluency anywhere from 6-10. In the case of *La Corneille*, the participants with a better level of French-language abilities had more difficulty linking the surtitles to the dialogue than those with less proficiency. Logically, the assumption would be that those who are more fluent in French may have an easier time linking the surtitles to the speaker on stage; this is the case when we consult the results for *Tubby et Nottubby* and *Jean et Béatrice*, although no conclusions can be made from these results. It is also necessary to keep in mind that these results are not accurate as the participants’ French proficiency levels and the number of participants from each L1 group were not equal and proportionate to one another.

According to these results, the audience's ability to link the surtitles to the actors' speech on stage does not seem to be determined by language, and perhaps the segmentation of the surtitles in itself is not a determining factor when it comes to the audience's ability to link the surtitles to the appropriate speaker on stage. As noted in section 4.2.b.1, aspects such as the action occurring on stage, the speed of dialogue or the height of the screen can also determine the audience's facility to read the surtitles and follow the action on stage. The only conclusion that can be drawn from these results is that the audience/participants who attended *La Corneille* had the easiest time linking the surtitles with the dialogue spoken on stage, which is more than likely attributed to the fact that many of the surtitles only included one speaker for this production. *La Corneille* also included much less action on stage. One participant for *La Corneille* did comment on this aspect, noting the following: "I think the subtle use of set dressing and props benefited this performance- it helped me focus on reading the surtitles and then watching the action on stage" (Group 1, English L1, French fluency 3). In section 4.1.b.1., it was noted that Group 3 participants also cited reasons such as the fact that the set was simple and the action on stage was more stationary as making it easier to read the surtitles. Similar reasons were provided with regard to the surtitles which were the easiest to follow with the action on stage. According to the answers to the additional comparative response questions of the survey that Group 3 participants completed, 70% of Group 3 participants indicated that the surtitles for *La Corneille* were the easiest to follow and a total of 12 comments were provided. The reasons cited include the fact the performance was slower-paced, being the "most straightforward" and entailing "less-complexity" because of less action on stage. In addition, the longer monologues "made it much easier to follow along", making it "easier to differentiate" one character's speech from the other. These results support the researcher's assumption that the audience may have an easier time following the surtitles for *La Corneille*.

As for *Tubby et Nottubby*, one deaf participant noted that "this play did not work well as it was very difficult to know when the titles were not working vs when the dialog was in English, and therefore not titled" (English L1, Group 1). This also supports the surtitler/researcher's assumption that the bilingual nature of this performance would be problematic for the reception of audience members who are deaf. The following comment made by the same participant who also attended a performance of *La Corneille* and participated in the survey underlines the value of the surtitles for deaf audience members:

As a person whom is profoundly deaf, with no hearing, the surtitles are vital to my enjoyment of the production. Without the use of surtitles, I am limited to guessing the action on stage. If I am with someone who can interpret, they will tell me basically what is happening but I will only gain about 30% of the same understanding as an audience member who could hear the play. While surtitles don't convey sound effects, as closed captions do, the effect is essentially the same and it allows me to essentially be on the same level as any audience member for the performance.

Unfortunately, the bilingual nature of this production prevented this audience member from being able to fully understand the performance.

One participant who saw a performance of *Jean et Béatrice* commented on the fact that it was at times difficult to link the lines to the right speaker because “the speed of dialogue was challenging” (Other L1, French fluency 5), while another suggested that “when actors move around, as they did in this performance, perhaps one might consider colour-coding each performers’ text to aide in faster visual cues” (English L1, French fluency 1). As explained in section 3.4.c., originally, the surtitler/researcher had wanted to use colour to help the audience link the correct lines to the correct speaker more easily, however the light pollution rendered this impossible as the coloured text appeared too dim on the screen. There were several comments with regard to the split-dialogue surtitles, which indicate that these surtitles lead to some confusion with regard to which character was speaking. While one participant sharing that they “liked the way the surtitles showed both actors' speech at the same time at key points, continuing the idea of dialogue” and noting that “more of that would be effective” (English L1, French fluency 5), some participants found that, at times, the split-dialogue surtitles made it unclear as to who was talking (English L1, French fluency 4; English L1, French fluency 7). Although the split-dialogue surtitles merely followed the flow of dialogue, rather than being positioned on the screen to mirror the position of the actors on stage, one participant noted that “sometimes the surtitles were placed geographically opposite to the performer, which made it confusing if you couldn’t understand French” (Other L1, French fluency 8). An additional participant noted the following: “Occasionally the text for both actors was presented side by side. I'm not sure, but I seem to recall that the actors "side" changed. That was a bit confusing. Side by side in general slowed down my ability to take the info in’ (English L1, French fluency 3). These participants thought that the position of the split-dialogue surtitles were concordant with the position of the actors on stage, which was not the case.

From these comments, it is evident that the split-dialogue surtitles created some level of confusion and made it difficult to link the surtitles to the appropriate speaker on stage for some audience members. Colour coding the surtitles would likely have resolved this issue, had it not been for the light pollution. Yet, with the small amount of comments made in this regard relative to the total amount of participants who used the surtitles, we can assume that the “split-dialogue” surtitles did not pose a particular issue to most participants’ comprehension and experience.

The synchronization of the surtitles is another factor which can affect the audience’s ability to link the surtitles to the correct speaker. The participants were asked to rate the synchronization of the surtitles with the dialogue spoken on stage. According to the results, the participants for *La Corneille* found that the surtitles for this production to be better synchronized, with a rate of 76% of participants indicating the surtitles were synchronized “all the time”, with the rate for *Jean et Béatrice* being quite similar, at 74% of participants. The surtitles for *Tubby et Nottubby* were rated the least synchronized with only 59% of participants indicating that the surtitles were synchronized with the dialogue.

The surtitles were well-synchronized with the dialogue on stage...	<i>La Corneille</i>	<i>Tubby et Nottubby</i>	<i>Jean et Béatrice</i>
...all the time	76%	59%	74%
...sometimes	24%	41%	26%
...never	0%	0%	0%

Table 23: Participants’ Rating of the Synchronization of the Surtitles (Participants who used the surtitles)

There were only two comments provided in the open-response answers of the survey with regards to the synchronization of the surtitles for *Tubby et Nottubby*, as follows:

- 1.) “Sometimes the subtitles [*sic*] did not keep up.”
- 2.) “It would be nice if they were synced up with the performance better.”

Recall that *Tubby et Nottubby* included a significant amount of improvisation as well as the bilingual aspect, which made ensuring the flawless synchronization of the surtitles rather challenging. Additionally, participants may have thought the surtitles were not synchronized well

with the dialogue because there were moments when there were no surtitles during improvised sections, during which the actors spoke in both languages. One participant noted the following:

I got the sense in this play that more ad-libbing occurred. While that can be really funny and engage the audience more, it can also have the slightly less positive effect of making it appear as though there are "missing" surtitles. I did not find this to negatively effect my experience at all, but I can imagine that perhaps some strictly anglophone members of the audience may perceive a sort of gap there (English L1, French fluency 8).

This participant was able to perceive that there was improvisation involved, however it did not disturb their experience. For others with less familiarity with the SL, this was not the case, with one participant explaining that the improvisation made it “harder to follow” (English L1, French fluency 1). Another participant did not make the connection and thought there was a technical error with the surtitles during the improvised section (‘Caesar’s show’): “J’ai remarqué un petit problème technique, je pense que c’était pendant la scène "cesar [*sic*] show” (French L1, French fluency 10). The improvised nature of certain segments of this performance also resulted in instances where English surtitles were displayed when English was also spoken on stage (instead of the French line that was supposed to have been delivered); one participant noted that this was “somewhat confusing”, even though the surtitles “make it easier” to understand the performance, which is in turn, “enhanced by the titling option” (Other L1, French fluency 5). We can see from such comments that the improvisation had a certain impact on the audience’s perception of the synchronization of the surtitles.

As for *La Corneille*, one participant noted that from time to time, the surtitles were too slow or too quick (Group 2, French L1), while another noted that they were “really impressed with whoever was running the surtitles -- they showed great facility at following the actors’ dialogue, and were able to quickly catch up in the event that a line or two was forgotten” (Group 1, English L1). Another participant commented that, “[r]arely were they out of synch” (French and English L1, French fluency 7).

Several comments were made with regards to the synchronization of the surtitles and humorous moments during the performance. One French L1 participant noted that they heard laughs from certain audience members before a joke was delivered in French on stage. Certain English L1 audience members made comments regarding humour and synchronization sharing the following:

- 1.) “I found it embarrassing if I read something funny on the screen and laughed aloud before the character actually said the funny line. This happened a few times.”
- 2.) “I found I was laughing at some of the things I was reading, but audience members listening were not laughing at the same time.”

This is as much a segmentation issue as it is a synchronization issue. It seems there were certain occasions where it would have been beneficial to split up longer surtitles into two to avoid faster readers from being able to read the surtitles before the punchline was delivered on stage and/or to delay the projection of a surtitle to avoid the TA to read the surtitles in advance.

4.2.c.) Source Text and Target Text Coherence

In order to determine how the audience members from different language backgrounds evaluated the surtitles with regard to their content and accuracy with the ST on stage, participants were asked to rate the content of the surtitles by indicating whether they contained “everything necessary”, “some deficiencies” or “many deficiencies” related to the translation, spelling or/and grammar. They were also asked to indicate, using the choices “agree”, “disagree”, “don’t know” or “N/A” whether or not the surtitles conveyed the dialogue spoken on stage. The results were further analyzed by language group to determine whether or not there were significant differences between the manner in which participants with varying French language backgrounds evaluated the content and accuracy of the surtitles.

4.2.c.1.) Content and Accuracy

Most participants who *used* the surtitles for each production evaluated the content positively, with 73% of all participants who used the surtitles for *La Corneille*, 69% of these participants for *Tubby et Nottubby* and 77% of these participants for *Jean et Béatrice* having chosen the category “everything necessary”.

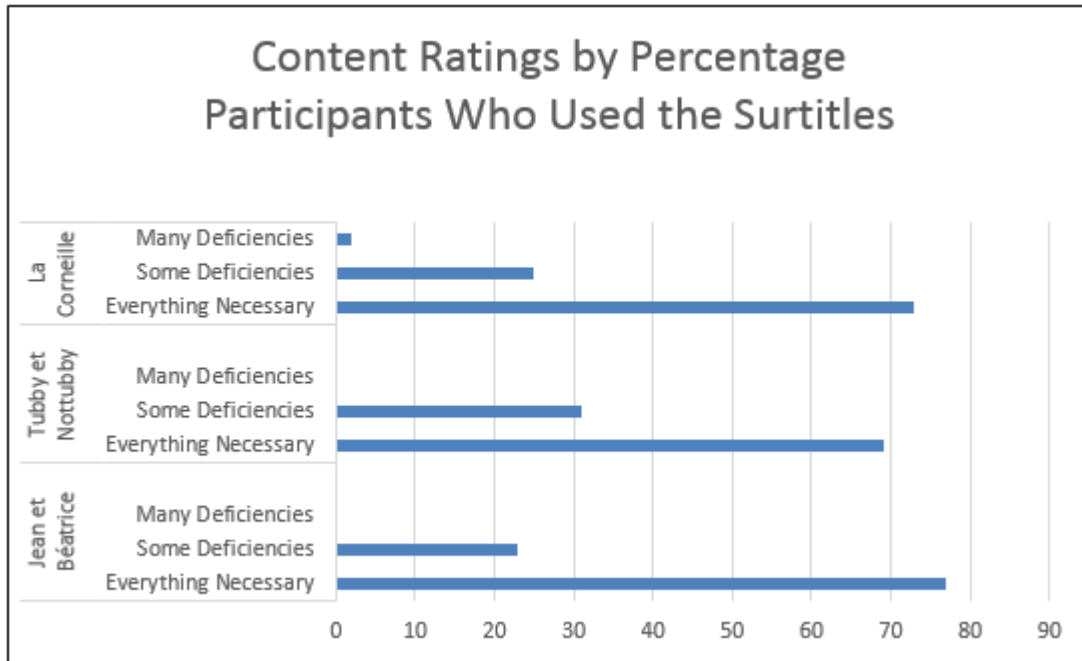


Figure 27: Content Ratings by Percentage (Participants Who Used the Surtitles)

Among the participants who used the surtitles, 25% of participants for *La Corneille*, 31% of participants for *Tubby et Nottubby*, and 23% of participants for *Jean et Béatrice* rated the surtitles as containing “some deficiencies”. With the exception of *La Corneille*, for which one participant rated the surtitles as containing “many deficiencies” (2% of participants who used the surtitles), no participants rated the surtitles as containing many deficiencies. There was only one specific comment made with regard to certain spelling and grammar mistakes spotted in the translation for *La Corneille*. The participant wrote that they “marked off that there were a few errors but they were minimal” going as far as to mention three instances where 1.) “one word was incorrect”, 2.) “there was a mistaken double-space at one point” and where 3.) “Mom as a proper noun should [have been] capitalized” (English L1, French fluency 1). This comment provides evidence that the deficiencies in the translation as regards spelling and grammar were minimal, but also highlights that minor errors can divert the audience’s attention from the performance as their focus shifts to the inaccuracies. This is further discussed below in the section regarding the accuracy of the surtitles. There were several comments made by participants regarding the translation and these are included below as well, since content and accuracy are interconnected.

A small number of participants for each group selected the category “N/A”. These were participants who were fluent in French and had indicated having used the surtitles, but obviously did not use them consistently enough to rate the content of the surtitles and were therefore not included in these results.

The text contained...	<i>La Corneille</i>	<i>Tubby et Nottubby</i>	<i>Jean et Béatrice</i>
...everything necessary	73%	69%	77%
...some deficiencies	25%	31%	23%
...many deficiencies	2%	-	-

Table 24: Participants Who Used the Surtitles – Ratings of the Content of the Surtitles

More than half (57%) of the participants who rated the content positively for *La Corneille* were participants from the English 1 group, with 38% of these participants having self-rated their French-language fluency at (not at all fluent) 1-5. Including the French L1, French and English L1 and Other L1 groups, at total of 62% of these participants rated their French-language fluency at 7 or higher. A total of 83% of the participants who indicated that the surtitles contained some deficiencies self-rated their French fluency at 8-10. One Francophone participant indicated that there were many deficiencies. As explained in the analysis of the accuracy of the surtitles below, this participant thought the surtitles were poorly translated; according to this participant, the surtitles were too literal.

Similar to the results for *La Corneille*, more than half (66%) of the participants who rated the content positively for *Tubby et Nottubby* were participants from the English 1 group, with 83% of these participants having self-rated their French-language fluency at (not at all fluent) 1-5. Including the French L1, French and English L1 and Other L1 groups, at total of 46% of these participants rated their French-language fluency at 6 or higher. Half of the participants who indicated that the surtitles contained some deficiencies self-rated their French fluency between 6-10. No participant stated there were “many deficiencies” in the surtitles for this production.

Similar to the results for *La Corneille* and *Tubby et Nottubby*, more than half (58%) of the participants who rated the content positively for *Jean et Béatrice* were participants from the English 1 group, with 74% of these participants having self-rated their French-language fluency at (not at all fluent) 1-5. Including the French L1, French and English L1 and Other L1 groups, a total of 50% of these participants rated their French-language fluency at 6 or higher. More than

half (64%) of the participants who indicated that the surtitles contained some deficiencies self-rated their French fluency between 6-10. No participant stated there were “many deficiencies” in the surtitles for this production, however there were some comments made in the open-response sections of the survey with regard to the fact that there were no surtitles during the opening scene when French words were projected onto the “window screen” on the backdrop of the set. The following comments were made in this regard:

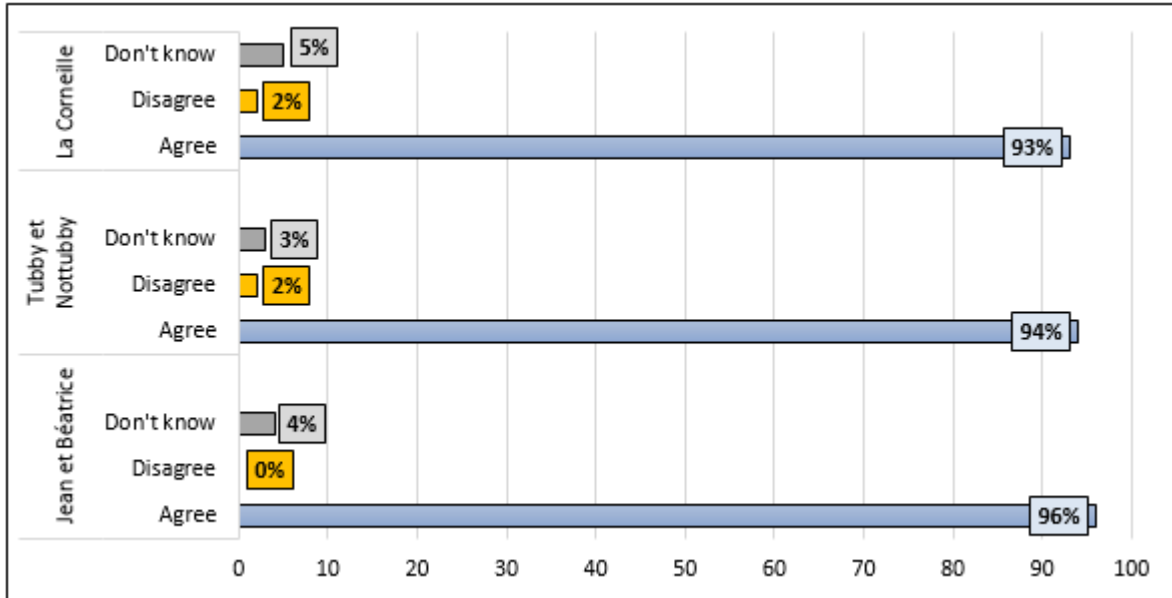
-At the beginning of the play there were projections in French (which seemed to be a description of the stage setting) which were not translated (the subtitles were dark). Not sure why this was overlooked. My written French is good enough to understand 80% of what was written but I had to translate for my partner (English L1, French fluency 1, Group 1).

-I noticed the very early [...] presentation in the play was not translated at first, is there a reason for that? It must have thrown off a few audience members in the early minutes of the performance. (French L1, French fluency 10, Group 2)

-There was an error at the beginning of the play. [...] I would have liked to have seen the projected text at the beginning/introduction to the play translated on the surtitles. [...]it would have made this part of the play less confusing (English L1, French fluency 1, Group 3)

As explained in section 3.4.c., there were no surtitles displayed during the opening scene at the request of the Director, however from the perspective of the surtitler/researcher, this would be problematic for the reception of the TL audience members. These comments support this assumption and demonstrate that the lack of surtitles 1.) distracted audience members and was a hindrance to those who needed the surtitles to understand the ST; and furthermore, 2.) was perceived as a technical error, further distracting the audience members. Additionally, most of the participants from the focus group agreed that they felt that not having surtitles would leave the strictly monolingual audience members feeling “left out”.

As for the accuracy of the surtitles, the majority of participants who used the surtitles for all three productions agreed that the surtitles conveyed the dialogue spoken on stage, for a total of 93% of all participants for *La Corneille*, 94% of all participants for *Tubby et Nottubby* and 96% of all participants for *Jean et Béatrice*.



**Figure 28: Participants Who Used the Subtitles
Accuracy Ratings of the Subtitles Per Production**

We can see from the graph below that this is also the case among all language groups as well; the majority of participants from each language group rated the accuracy of the subtitles positively for all three productions combined. Due to the fact that there was a larger number of French L1 participants who selected the category “N/A” (because they did not rely consistently on the subtitles), the calculations below for those agreed that the subtitles were accurate was calculated by omitting the participants who selected “N/A” for each L1 group. The participants from all L1 groups agreed that the subtitles were accurate by a vast majority, with 100% of French and English L1 participant, 97% of Other L1 participants and 92% of English L1 and French L1 participants having agreed that the subtitles were accurate. If we take into account that 7% of the English L1 participants and 3% of the Other L1 participants indicated that they didn’t know whether or not the subtitles were accurate and omit these numbers from the overall calculations for the accuracy of the subtitles, then 100% of L1 groups, with the exception of the French L1 group, agreed that the subtitles were accurate. The only participants who disagreed that the subtitles were accurate were from the French L1 group, with 6% of these participants choosing this answer.

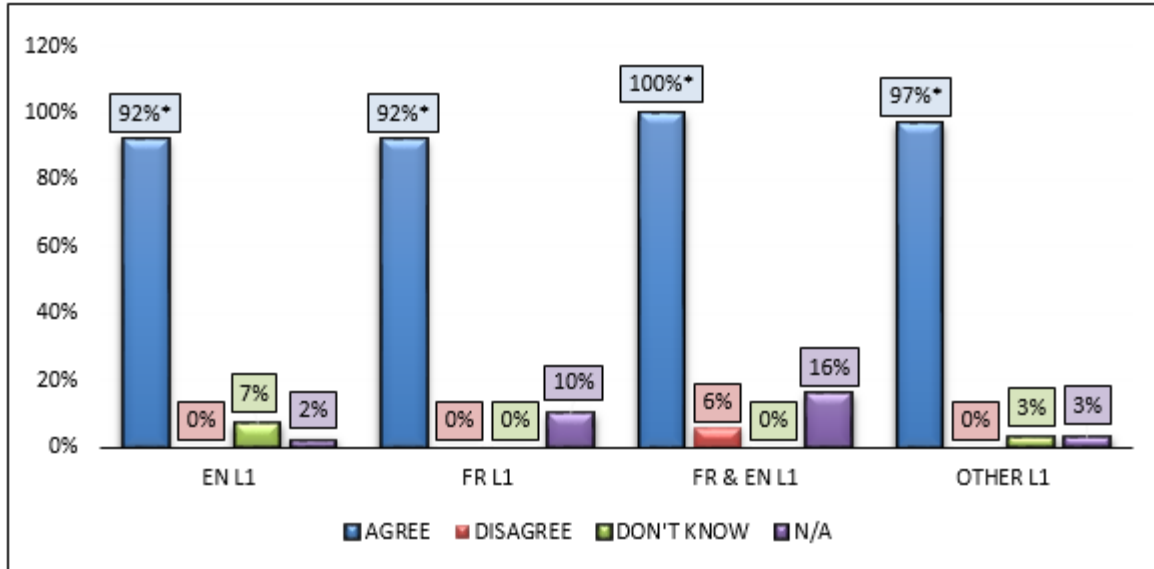


Figure 29: Accuracy Ratings of the Surtitles Per L1 Group (Participants Who Used the Surtitles)

Most of the English L1 participants who used the surtitles for *La Corneille* and agreed that the surtitles conveyed the dialogue on stage had some level of familiarity with French, with 86% of these participants having either taken a French as a Second Language class, been enrolled in Early French Immersion or in a Francophone program (1 participant), who were/are enrolled in a university French class or in a university French program, or have lived and learned French in France. Below are the ranges of French-language fluency ratings for each first-language group for participants who agreed that the surtitles conveyed the dialogue spoken on stage:

Participants' First Language	Self-Rated Fluency	
	Ranging from (not at all fluent) 1-5	Ranging from 6-10 (fluent)
English L1	57%	43%
French L1	0%	100% (ratings of 9-10)
French & English L1	0%	100% (ratings of 7-10)
Other L1	11%	89% (ratings of 6-10)

Table 25: Self-Ratings of French-Language Fluency - Participants Who Used the Surtitles and Agreed that the Surtitles for *La Corneille* Conveyed the Dialogue on Stage

The French L1 participants rated their fluency between 9-10, with 80% of these participants having rated their fluency at 10 (fluent), while the French and English L1 participants rated their

fluency between 7-10. The majority of participants with a L1 other than French or English rated their fluency between 6-10, for a total of 89% of these participants.

Several comments were made in the open-response questions from participants who commented positively on the translation of the surtitles, with participants stating the “translation was excellent” (English, L1, French fluency 3) and that the surtitles were “well written” (English L1, French fluency 3); appropriate and exact (French and English L1, French fluency 9); and “seemed faithful to the text” (French and English L1, French fluency 10). Another participant commented that the translation conveyed informal expressions and Franco-Canadian expressions accurately (Other L1, French fluency 8). One participant was unsure as to the translation, noting that there were “a couple of times” where “the translation of a word seemed odd” although admitting that they were “not in a strong position to argue because of [their] language abilities” (English L1, French fluency 3). There was only one participant who disagreed that the surtitles conveyed the dialogue on stage (French L1, French fluency 10). This person was of the opinion that the surtitles should have been adapted and was disturbed by the fact that they were too literal, having shared the following comment in an open-response question: “A proper translation is necessary. A trained and experienced translator knows that a play needs to be translated and adapted to some degree [...]. This translation was quite poor and certainly not adapted.” It is clear that based on the survey results, the majority of French L1 participants were not of this opinion. This participant’s opinion also goes against the current understanding in the field. As cited in Chapter 1, section 1.3: in surtitling contexts consisting of bilingual or multilingual spectators, it is important to reproduce the ST as close to its original form as possible since these audience members simultaneously have access to both the ST and the TT. Otherwise, any incoherencies between the ST and the TT could have a negative impact on their reception of the production since they can easily be distracted by what they would perceive as errors and thus be more prone to diverting their attention from the performance on stage (Karamitroglou, 1998; Ladouceur, 2013a; 2013c).

In the case of this single participant, the effect was the opposite. However, certain participants’ comments for the other two productions indicate an opposing opinion, indicating that it is in fact true that incoherencies between the surtitled TT and the ST on stage can be disturbing to some audience members. A participant for *Jean et Béatrice* explained the following: “I understand that surtitles may not be an exact translation of the script, and will [be] paraphrased

in many cases, however, care needs to be taken that the English is correct” (English L1, French fluency 1). Additionally, a participant for *Tubby et Nottubby* explained the following:

I found that often the translations weren't exact. I know that translation is often really difficult and stuff doesn't translate exactly, but there were some parts that were just way off (Like when Tubby was detailing the veggies they'd have, he said des tomates et des carottes but the translation had spinach...he did not say spinach in the French!). And sometimes there would be a longer sentence that was condensed into a general gist in English. (English L1, French fluency 5)

This is the disadvantage of having a fixed-product (the surtitles) with a live-product (the performance); even though the translation in the surtitles may be accurate with the script, albeit paraphrased or condensed at times due to the temporal and spatial constraints of surtitling, there are inevitably moments during performances where the actors may improvise, skip, or reverse lines and in these moments, the surtitles are perceived to be incorrect. As noted, there was a significant amount of improvisation involved in *Tubby et Nottubby*. Another participant was not disturbed by this, noting that “sometimes the subtitles [*sic*] translated very loosely but overall they made understanding/comprehending the play easier” (English L1, French fluency 5). These few comments underscore the fact that the surtitles will be judged as erroneous when there are incoherencies between the ST and surtitled TT that are noticeable for those with some knowledge of the SL.

Of the few participants who indicated that they didn't know whether or not the surtitles for *La Corneille* conveyed the dialogue, two thirds had some level of exposure to French (FSL classes or University French class) and rated their fluency at 2 and 4. The other participants indicated they were not at all fluent and had no previous experience with French. The few participants who selected N/A for this question were Francophone participants with fluency ratings of 9 and 10 and did not use the surtitles; they were therefore not included in the overall results displayed in Figure 29 above.

Like the participants for *La Corneille*, most of the English L1 participants who used the surtitles for *Tubby et Nottubby* agreed that the surtitles conveyed the dialogue on stage had some level of familiarity with French, with 92% of these participants having either taken a French as a Second Language class, been enrolled in Early French Immersion or in a Francophone program, who were/are enrolled in a university French class or in a university French program, or have lived for a short period in the province of Quebec. More than half of these participants rated their French-language fluency at 1-5, while the other 33% rated with fluency at 6-10 with 50% of these

participants rating their fluency at 6. Below are the ranges of French-language fluency ratings for each first-language group participants who agreed the surtitles conveyed the dialogue for this production:

Participants' First Language	Self-Rated Fluency	
	Ranging from (not at all fluent) 1-5	Ranging from 6-10 (fluent)
English L1	67%	33% (ratings of 6-10)
French L1	0%	100% (ratings of 9-10)
French & English L1	12% (ratings of 5)	88% (ratings of 6-10)
Other L1	37% (ratings of 2-5)	63% (ratings of 6-10)

Table 26: Self-Ratings of French-Language Fluency - Participants Who Used the Surtitles and Agreed that the Surtitles for *Tubby et Nottubby* Conveyed the Dialogue on Stage

All of the French L1 participants rated their fluency between 9-10, with 90% of these participants having rated their fluency at 10 (fluent), while the French and English L1 participants rated their fluency between 5-10, with 43% of these participants having rated their fluency at 10. The majority of participants with a L1 other than French or English rated their fluency between 2-10, with 37% rating their fluency at 2-5 and 63% rating their fluency at 6-10.

There was only one participant who disagreed that the surtitles conveyed the dialogue on stage whose L1 is French (self-rated fluency 10). They provided no reason why in the open-response question. The two participants who indicated that they didn't know whether or not the surtitles conveyed the dialogue (English L1, 1 Other L1) with self-rated French language fluency of 3 and 4 obviously did not have enough knowledge of French to be able to determine whether or not the surtitles conveyed the dialogue.

All of the English L1 participants who used the surtitles for *Jean et Béatrice* and agreed that the surtitles conveyed the dialogue on stage had some level of familiarity with French, having either taken a French as a Second Language class, been enrolled in Early French Immersion or in a Francophone program, who were/are enrolled in a university French class or in a university French program, had private French language instruction, or used the language at work. Much like the results for *Tubby et Nottubby* 68% of these participants rated their French-language fluency at 1-5, while the other 32% rated with fluency at 7-8. Below are the ranges of French-language fluency ratings for each first-language group participants who agreed the surtitles conveyed the dialogue:

Participants' First Language	Self-Rated Fluency	
	Ranging from (not at all fluent) 1-5	Ranging from 6-10 (fluent)
English L1	68%	32% (7-8)
French L1	0%	100% (ratings of 10)
French & English L1	0%	100% (ratings of 7-10)
Other L1	37% (ratings of 3-5)	63% (ratings of 6-8)

Table 27: Self-Ratings of French-Language Fluency - Participants Who Used the Surtitles and Agreed that the Surtitles for *Jean et Béatrice* Conveyed the Dialogue on Stage

All of the French L1 participants rated their fluency at 10 (fluent) and 100% of the French and English L1 participants rated their fluency between 7-10. The majority of participants with a L1 other than French or English rated their fluency between 3-8, with 25% rating their fluency at 3-5 and 75% rating their fluency at 6-8.

There were no participants who disagreed that the surtitles conveyed the dialogue on stage for this production. Of the few participants who indicated that they didn't know whether or not the surtitles conveyed the dialogue, both participants' first language is English and have no knowledge of French.

From these collective results, we see that most participants rated the content and accuracy of the surtitles positively, regardless of their level of fluency in French. It is interesting to note that although most English L1 participants had some level of French-language exposure at some point of their lives, the majority of these participants were most certainly not fluent in French, having rated their French-language proficiency at less than 5. These participants thus had enough confidence in the surtitles to rate the content and accuracy of the surtitles positively, with the other non-linguistic semiotic aspects and the synchronization of the surtitles likely contributing to their confidence in the surtitles. It is however surprising that there is such a large discrepancy between the ratings for the content as opposed to those for the accuracy of the surtitles. Accuracy depends on the content of the surtitles. If the surtitles received high ratings for the accuracy of the surtitles, the logical conclusion would be that the content should also have been rated similarly by participants, yet this was not the case. The open-response answers provided by the participants indicate that perhaps the ratings for content were based on perceived errors in the surtitles when the dialogue on stage was improvised or when portions of the surtitles were necessarily condensed, giving the audience the impression of there being some errors in the translation. The

content and accuracy ratings were mostly positive for all L1 groups. However, the comments above highlight the fact that inconsistencies between the ST and TT do matter for audiences who have knowledge of both the SL and the TL. The content and accuracy ratings were mostly positive for all L1 groups. However, the comments above highlight the fact that inconsistencies between the ST and TT do matter for audiences who have knowledge of both the SL and the TL. These results also indicate that the French L1 group did not judge the translation severely. The surtitles were only negatively evaluated by one French L1 participant. Had more Francophone participants judged the translation negatively, certainly more comments would have been made.

4.2.c.2.) Readability and Clarity

As discussed in section 2.2.a., content, lexical density, style, text structure, textual features, syntactic complexity, text segmentation and semantic coherence are all elements which affect the readability of surtitles. Readability is defined as the audience's ease of reading, which is determined by these elements. In the field of subtitling, the conventional criteria for ensuring readability is to use simple and clear structures to ensure that the surtitles are easily perceivable (Griesel, 2009). Readability determines how easy it is to understand the surtitles and thus, the readability of the surtitles will determine the clarity of the message delivered to the audience. To determine how easy it was for the audience members to understand the surtitles, participants were asked to select whether it was "easy", "sometimes hard" or "hard" to understand the surtitles.

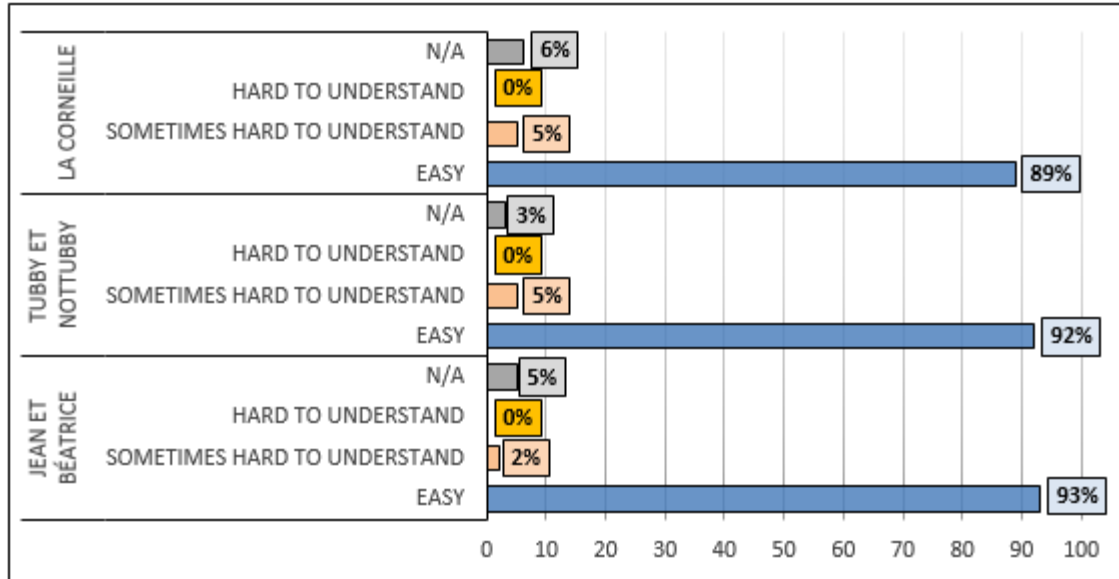


Figure 30: Overall Participants' Ratings of the Clarity of the Surtitles in Percentages

The surtitles for all productions received high ratings for readability, with 98% of participants who used the surtitles and attended a performance of *Jean et Béatrice*, and 95% of participants who attended *Tubby et Nottubby* and *La Corneille* indicating that the surtitles were “easy to understand”. No comments were provided by participants in the open-response questions with immediate regard to their ability to understand the surtitles. However, there was an interesting comment made during the focus group which is noteworthy: one participant shared an account of the differences in perception and overall comprehension of the play between herself (an advanced French-language learner) and her friend (a “very low French level”). Following the play when discussing their experience, this participant learned that her friend’s “comprehension of what happened was a little foggier” and that although “[her friend] got the main idea of everything that was going on with the surtitles...it wasn’t as deep as knowledge as what [she personally] had with the combination of the two.” This comment indicates that surtitles not only reinforce comprehension of the play for audience members who do not know the source language, but also play an active role in forming a deeper linguistic connection to the dialogue, and thus to the performance as a whole, for those members that have an existing knowledge of the SL. These results indicate that the syntactic complexity and semantic coherence of the surtitles was clear enough to facilitate the audience’s understanding of all three plays.

4.3.) Linguistic and Cultural Aspects

As discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.3., in his proposed variables for measuring audience reception, Gambier (2009) proposes correlating technical variables with sociological variables as well as audiovisual variables. This section deals with certain sociological dimensions of the reception of surtitles, addressing the cultural and linguistic aspects of the surtitling context of this particular study. The results of the survey analyzed in this section address the participants' reasons for using or not using the surtitles according to the participants' first language and self-rated French fluency; participants' strategies for using or ignoring the surtitles; the overall influence of the surtitles on the participants' experience; and the language learning potentials of surtitles and cultural implications. The results serve to address whether or not different linguistic groups have different ways of making use of the surtitles, to determine in which manners the perceptions and reactions to the English surtitles on behalf of these different groups differ and/or converge, to gain a better understanding as to how surtitles impact the overall viewing experience for audience members of differing language backgrounds and to provide a preliminary assessment of the language learning potentials of surtitles.

Recall that Gottlieb's (2012) *perception modes* can be applied to surtitles, functioning in the following two manners: either as a *text substitute* for audience members who 1.) have a linguistic impairment (i.e. no knowledge of the SL) or have a sensory impairment (i.e. deaf or hard of hearing) or, 2.) in the case of audience members who understand both the SL and the TL, the surtitles function as a *cognitive supplement*. In the subtitling context, viewers may use subtitles to facilitate their understanding of the ST and simultaneously to compare the ST to evaluate or criticize the TT (Gottlieb, 2005), which has been discussed in the research on surtitling as well, especially in the research pertaining to the Canadian minority Francophone contexts (Ladouceur, *forthcoming*, Ladouceur, 2013c). The results also serve to support Liss' (2012) assertions about Francophile and Francophone audience members' use of the surtitles, as detailed in Chapter 1, section 1.4. Additionally, we must recall that Griesel's (2009) audience model for theatre surtitles may be in need of re-evaluation for the particular surtitling context at hand. The results outlined in each of these subsections include the overall participants for all three surtitled productions.

4.3.a.) Reasons for Using or Not Using Surtitles According to First Language and French Fluency

In order to gain a better understanding as to how audience members make use of the surtitles in this Francophone minority context, participants were asked to indicate whether they used or did not use the surtitles and to provide the reason(s) why or why not. Among all participants who participated in this study, 93% of all participants used the surtitles to some degree, while only 7% of participants indicated not having used the surtitles at all. Among those who used the surtitles, we find that the participants' self-rated French fluency ratings are nearly equally distributed across the spectrum (Likert scale from 1- "not at all fluent" to 10- "fluent").

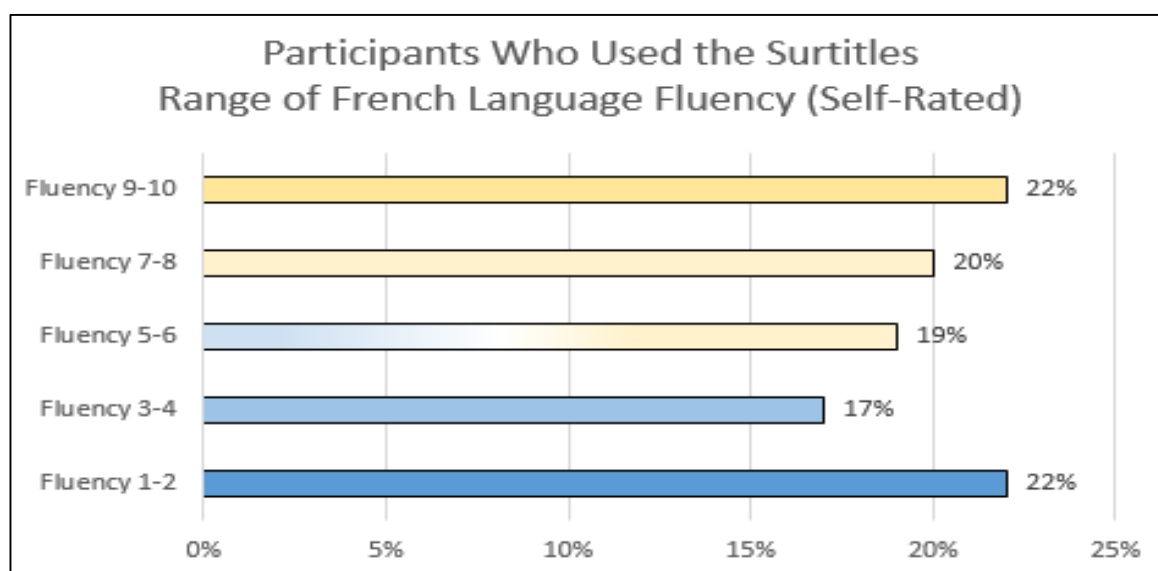


Figure 31: Range of Self-Rated French Language Fluency for all Participants Who Used the Surtitles

The majority of those who used the surtitles were from the English L1 group, consisting of 57% of participants. Among these participants, 82% were participants who had rated their French fluency anywhere from 1-6. Those with a L1 other than French or/and English consisted of 18% of the total participants who used the surtitles, with 54% of these participants rating their French fluency anywhere from 7-10.

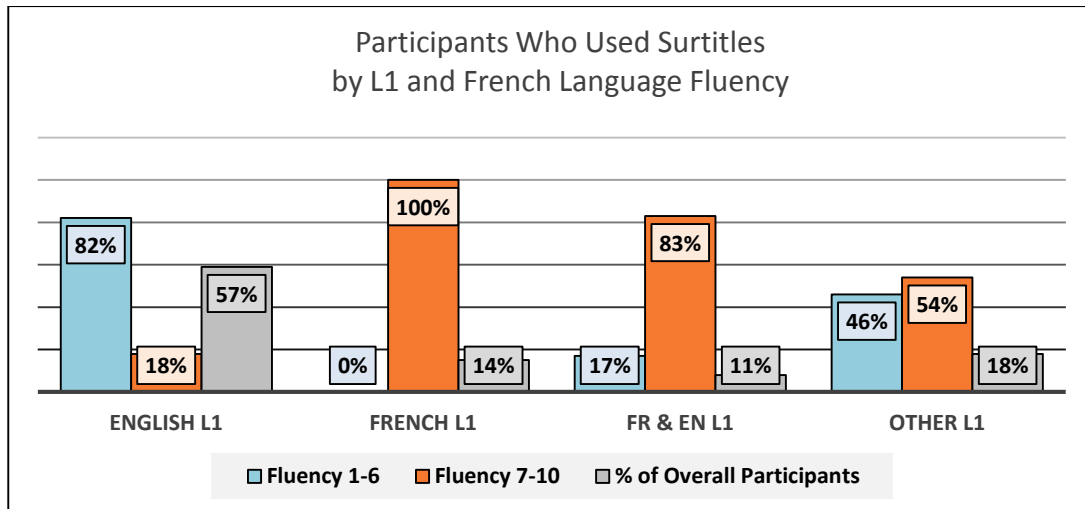


Figure 32: Participants Who Used the Surtitles Analyzed by L1 and Self-Rated French Language Fluency

A total of 14% of overall participants were from the French L1 group with 100% of participants rating their fluency from 7-10, and the majority (91%) of these participants self-rating their fluency as being “fluent” (10). Lastly, a total of 11% of participants who used the subtitles were from the French and English L1 group, with 83% of these participants rating their fluency from 7-10, with only 33% of these participants self-rating their fluency as “fluent” (10). Overall, those indicating their first languages as being both English and French rated their French language proficiency lower than those who indicated that French is their L1.

Through analyzing the participants’ responses in the open-response question regarding their reason(s) for using the subtitles, a notable trend was observed. The participants with French fluency ratings of 1 to 6, which were exclusively from the English L1 and Other L1 groups with the exception of two participants from the French and English L1 group, explained that they needed to use the subtitles for one or more of the following reasons: they have no knowledge of French or limited French comprehension; to enhance their understanding; to confirm comprehension; the speed of the actors’ speech was too rapid; and to understand unknown expressions and vocabulary. Most participants who rated their fluency as 5 or 6 are those who commented that they used the subtitles to confirm their comprehension and when there were unknown French expressions and vocabulary spoken on stage. Most participants with French fluency ratings of 7-10, from all L1 groups (English, French, French and English, Other), explained that they consulted the subtitles either out of interest and curiosity, and/or to compare

the translation (main reason provided by participants with ratings of 10); because they were difficult to ignore (very few comments made); for understanding unknown Quebecois expressions; when missing a word or a line spoken on stage due to rapid dialogue; when curious about the English equivalent of an expression or to learn the English equivalent of a word spoken on stage; and to confirm their comprehension of the ST (mostly participants with fluency ratings of 7 or 8). This is further corroborated by the participants' responses to the survey question asking whether or not Francophone participants resorted to reading the surtitles "sometimes", "often" or "never".

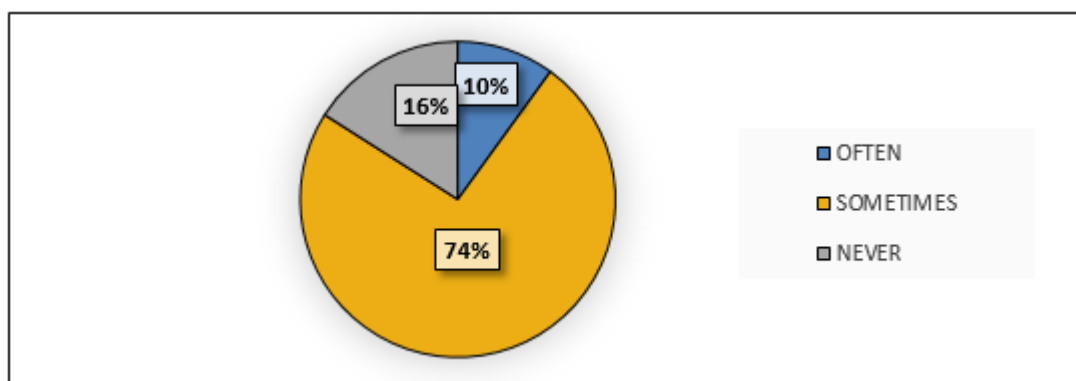


Figure 33: Frequency at Which Francophone Participants Resorted to Using the Surtitles

A total of 86% of all Francophone participants indicated that they resorted to using the surtitles, with 10% of these participants indicating they resorted to the surtitles "often", 74% indicating they "sometimes" resorted to reading the surtitles. Participants who indicated that they had resorted to reading the surtitles were asked to specify why. The reasons provided by these participants in this section are the same as those provided above.

Among the overall participants who used the surtitles, 58% self-rated their French-language fluency anywhere between 1-6 and consisted of audience members primarily from the English L1 and Other L1 groups, while the other 42% of participants who used the surtitles indicated their French-fluency as anywhere from 7-10 and consisted primarily of audience members from the French and English L1 and French L1 groups, but also of members of the English L1 (one participant) and Other L1 groups (three participants).

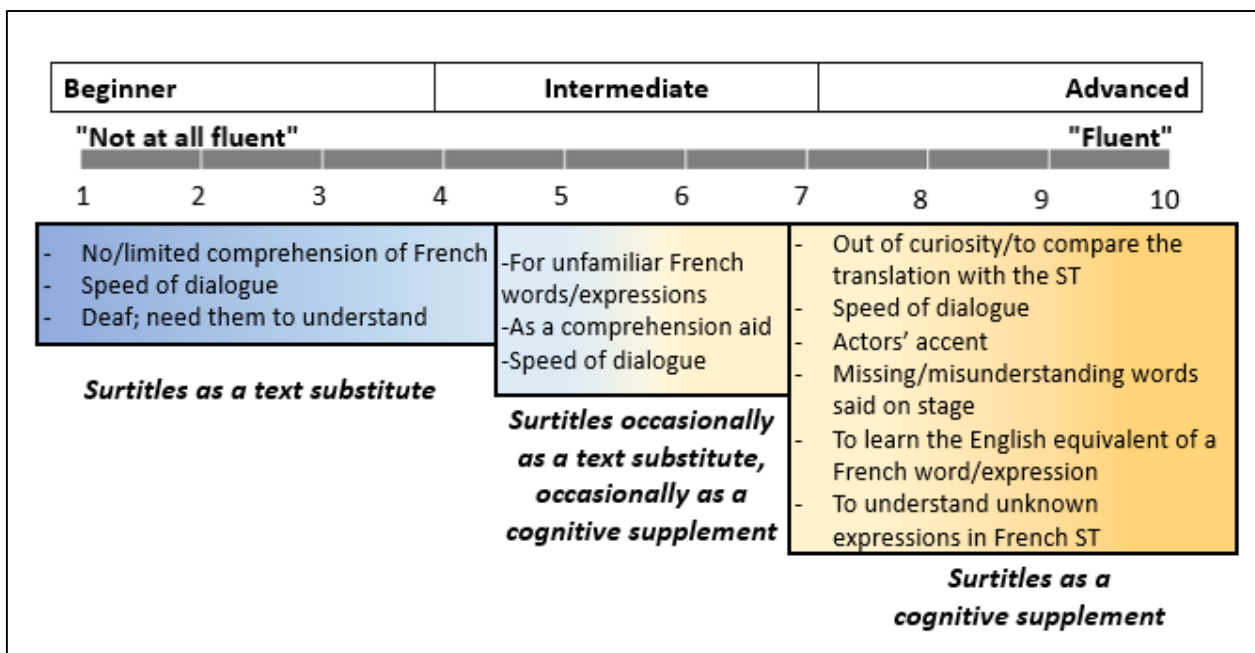


Figure 34: Overall Participants Who Used the Surtitles – Reasons for Using the Surtitles Analyzed by Self-Rated French Language Fluency

The illustration above depicts the results regarding the participants' reasons for using the surtitles. For those with French language fluency ratings between 1 and 4 (beginner) – the participants with no French language abilities or for those who were deaf (one participant) – the surtitles acted as a text substitute, aided by bilingually mediated communication⁴¹, but also as an occasional cognitive supplement for those with some knowledge of French. In general, for those with French language fluency ratings of 5-7 (intermediate), the surtitles acted at times as a text substitute, but mainly as a cognitive supplement, functioning as a linguistic support for facilitating their understanding of the ST. On the opposite end of the spectrum, the surtitles acted as a cognitive supplement for those with French language fluency ratings of 8-10 (advanced) and were generally used out of curiosity with regards to the translation. In the case of these more advanced participants, the comments provided show that their comparison of the ST and TT operated in a ST-TT direction as well as in a TT-ST direction to check for comprehension, like Ghia's (2011) study on subtitling revealed (p.165-166). The surtitles were even used by these participants for learning purposes from a 'reversed' surtitling perspective (L2-TT; L1-ST) to learn English words or expressions.

⁴¹ Although, not for the deaf participant. In this case, the surtitles functioned as a text substitute, with solely monolingual communication.

As for the participants who did not use the surtitles, 8% of these participants were from the English L1 group (fluency rating 8), 17% were from the Other L1 group (fluency rating of 10), 25% were from the French and English L1 group (fluency rating 10) and 50% were from the French L1 group (fluency rating 10, one participant with a rating of 9). Most of these participants explained that French is their first language (or that they are bilingual) and they have no need to use the surtitles. A couple participants noted that they preferred focusing their attention on the action on stage.

As mentioned above, only 7% of the overall participants indicated not having used the surtitles. It must be noted that this likely does not proportionally reflect the situation at *L'UniThéâtre*. Surely, many Francophones choose not to use the surtitles. It is quite possible that many Francophone patrons did not participate in this study because they assumed that the study was focused on those who used the surtitles, even though there were announcements made which specified otherwise.

4.3.b.) Strategies for Using or Ignoring the Surtitles According to French Language Fluency

The participants' comments regarding their strategies for using or ignoring the surtitles help to elucidate the findings described above. The participants who used the surtitles explained their strategies for using or ignoring the surtitles and their responses we analyzed according to the participants' first language(s) and their self-rated French language fluency. Similar to the results discussed in the previous section, there is a noticeable trend regarding the strategies that participants used according to their level of French fluency. Those with low French language proficiency (fluency 1-4) had similar strategies which differed and were quite opposite from those with a high level of fluency. Those with fluency ratings between 5 and 6 (and up to 7) had similar strategies that were a mixture of the strategies noted by those with low fluency and the strategies noted by those with high proficiency. Those who rated their French fluency anywhere from 8 to 10 had quite similar strategies as well, which were the opposite of those with low fluency ratings. Although there is specific distinction between the strategies used according to differing levels of French fluency, there is no exact delineation between the strategies for different fluency levels

(beginner 1-4, intermediate 5-6, 6-7, advanced 8-10); we find some of the same strategies explained by participants from all fluency levels.

Participants with fluency ratings between 1 and 4 (beginner *or deaf*), as noted in the section above, consisted of members of the English L1 and Other L1 groups only. Once again, it becomes evident that the surtitles acted as a text substitute, aided by bilingually mediated communication, for these participants, but also as an occasional cognitive supplement for those with some knowledge of French. In general, these participants noted that they would read the surtitles quickly to be able to focus their attention on the actors on stage. Some mentioned they would try to listen to the French first, and then confirm their comprehension by checking the surtitles. However, a couple of participants noted that this strategy did not always work, because the surtitles would often not stay on the screen long enough to allow enough reading time to use this strategy. These participants explained that switching to reading the surtitles first did not help as much for testing their French, one noting that it felt that they were “cheating” because they knew the dialogue before it was spoken. On the other hand, another participant commented that they liked being able to understand more of the French spoken by having just read the surtitles. Other participants, mainly those with higher fluency ratings (3-4) noted that they only read the surtitles when they need clarification or when they did not understand. Only one participant explained that they would switch their attention between the surtitles and the actors on stage as a reading and viewing strategy. However, since most participants claimed that they would read the surtitles quickly prior to shifting their focus back to the action and dialogue on stage, perhaps this is an indication that there was too much text in the surtitles for the amount of time they were displayed – at least for certain participants. While some participants reported never missing any of the action, others noted having spent most of the time reading, with one participant explaining their strategy as “picturing what the actors were doing while reading” (Other L1, French fluency 3). It must be noted that the proportion of participants that made such comments is extremely small compared to these participants’ overall explanations.

In general, those with French language fluency ratings of 5 to 6 (intermediate), which consisted solely of members from the English L1 and Other L1 groups, explained that they used the surtitles for clarification. Similar to the participants with fluency ratings between 1 and 4, some of these participants also explained that their strategy was to read quickly or scan the surtitles and then focus their attention on stage, however much fewer comments were provided

in this regard by these participants. Some participants explained they generally ignored the surtitles and tried to rely on their knowledge of French, but used them for clarification when needed. As observed in the results outlined in the prior section, for the majority of these participants, the surtitles acted at times as a text substitute, but mainly as a cognitive supplement, functioning as a linguistic support for facilitating their understanding of the ST at moments when they had difficulty understanding the French dialogue and seemed to do so easily, since there were very few comments indicating otherwise.

However, as outlined in section 4.3.b.1, one participant noted that they found that it was almost impossible to listen and read together, because the actors were speaking too quickly and that at times, they had to sacrifice watching the action and resort to simply reading the surtitles (English L1, French fluency 6). Another participant noted that their strategy entailed “reading the surtitles the whole time” (Other L1, French fluency 6). Although these were the only two comments made regarding a participant’s inability to follow the action on stage and absorb the surtitles, as outlined in the previous section, this indicates that the surtitles were too lengthy and/or the display times too short for certain participants, perhaps due to their reading abilities, as explained in section 4.2.b.1.

The majority of English L1 and Other L1 participants with French language fluency ratings of 7-10 (advanced) explained that their strategy entailed focusing on the dialogue and action on stage, and then consulting the surtitles during moments they did not understand a word or expression or when dialogue was rapid, and/or to quickly compare the content of the translation to what was said on stage. Others noted they would read the surtitles quickly to confirm whether or not the translation was well adapted to the ST. For some of these participants, the surtitles acted principally as a cognitive supplement, functioning as a linguistic support. For instance, one participant shared the following: “When I felt unsure and wanted to verify or clarify, I generally found that glancing at the surtitles was very helpful” (English L1, French fluency 8). For others, the surtitles were deemed unnecessary to their comprehension and their strategy was to ignore the surtitles, “which posed no problem at all” (English L1, French fluency 8). Some participants explained that they ignored the surtitles most of the time and checked for comprehension when required. One participant noted that they became somewhat distracted from the performance by comparing the translation.

As for the French and English L1 and French L1 participants, most participants explained that they would listen to the dialogue first and then read the surtitles, like the English and Other L1 participants with fluency ratings from 7 to 10 (opposite to the strategy used by participants with low proficiency), most often out of curiosity and to check the accuracy of the translation. Several of these participants noted using the surtitles as a linguistic support when they needed to check their comprehension of an unknown word or expression. There were several comments provided regarding it being easy to follow or ignore the surtitles as necessary, with some participants explaining that sitting in the first row and the height of the screen (*La Corneille; Tubby et Nottubby*) made it easier to ignore the surtitles.

As observed in the previous section, the surtitles acted as a cognitive supplement for participants who are more proficient in French and were generally used out of curiosity with regards to the translation. From the explanations provided by English L1 and Other L1 participants, the surtitles also acted as a cognitive supplement, but were used more frequently to confirm their comprehension of the ST. Compared to the explanations of strategies provided by participants with French fluency ratings of 1-4, participants with a higher French proficiency would process the ST (dialogue and performance) before referring to the surtitles and had an easier time switching back and forth between the surtitles. Those with lower proficiency levels had difficulties processing the ST first and tended to process the TT (the surtitles) first to ensure their comprehension of the ST.

The participants who did not use the surtitles did not provide many strategies for ignoring the surtitles. Some participants said they simply focused on the action on stage, with one participant clarifying that the surtitles were not disturbing and that it was easy to focus their attention on stage. Similar to the French and English L1 and French L1 participants who used the surtitles, certain members of this group specified that the surtitles were easy to ignore because of the height of the screen (*Tubby et Nottubby*), when sitting closer to the stage, or because the surtitles were pale in brightness (*Jean et Béatrice*). One participant noted it was difficult to avoid looking at the surtitles, while another explained it was difficult at the beginning, but that they quickly got used to it (French L1, French fluency 10).

4.3.c.) Overall Influence on Experience

The participants were asked how the surtitles influenced their theatre experience and these responses were analyzed according to the participants' self-rated French fluency. Overall, 72% of all participants who used the surtitles claimed that the surtitles facilitated their theatre experience, having selected the option "They made it easier", with 44% of these participants having rated their fluency anywhere from 1 to 4 (English L1 and Other L1 groups), 22% having rated their fluency from 5 to 6 (English L1 and Other L1 groups) and 34% of participants who rated their fluency anywhere between 7 to 10 (French and English L1, French L1 and some participants from the English L1 and Other L1 groups). It is interesting that the surtitles facilitated the theatre viewing experience of such a large number of participants with higher French language proficiency.

We can observe that while 25% of overall participants evaluated the surtitles as not having had an influence on their experience, most participants with higher levels of French proficiency selected the option "no influence", with 84% of those who rated their fluency anywhere between 7 and 10 (French and English L1, French L1, and some participants of the English L1 and Other L1 groups). This is logical, considering that those with higher levels of French proficiency have little need for the surtitles.

Only 3% of overall participants evaluated the surtitles as having been disruptive to their experience, with five participants who selected the option "they were disruptive". Those who considered the surtitles to be disruptive included three participants with French fluency ratings of 1-4 and two French L1 participants with fluency ratings of 10. From these results we can see that overall, the surtitles had either a positive, or neutral influence on the audiences' theatre experience.

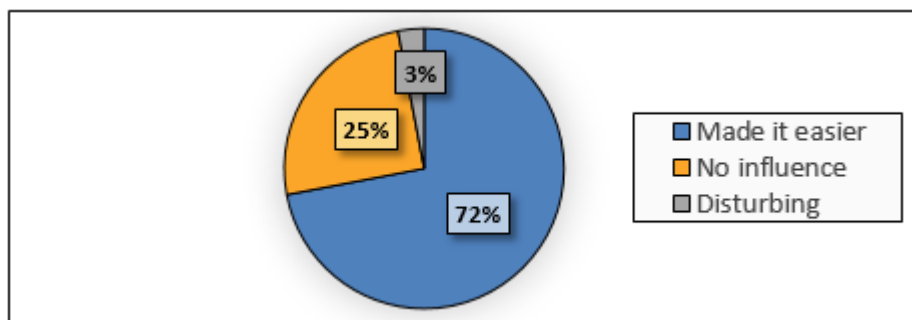


Figure 35: Influence of the Surtitles on the Audience's Theatre Experience (Participants Who Used the Surtitles)

The graph below depicts the distribution of the participants' French language fluency ratings for each respective survey answer ("made it easier", "no influence" and "disturbing"). However, in order to gain an accurate representation of the results, it is important to examine the grey bars ("Overall" results) in the graph below.

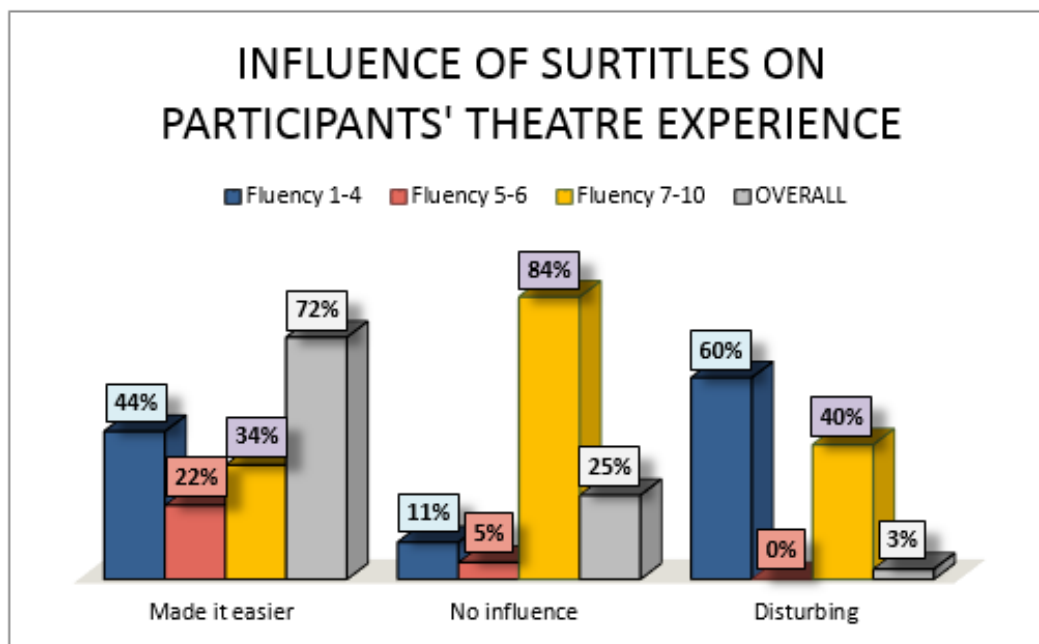


Figure 36: Influence of Surtitles on Participants' Theatre Experience According to French Language Fluency (Distribution of Participants' French Language Fluency Per Answer Chosen)

Among the other 7% of participants who did not make use of the surtitles (French fluency ratings between 8 and 10), the majority (58%) of these participants indicated that the surtitles did not influence their experience, while some of these participants (25%) even indicated that the surtitles facilitated their experience, which means certain participants from this group actually made use of the surtitles as well, or at least on occasion. Only two of these participants (17%) found that the surtitles were disruptive to their experience.

It is very interesting to note that on the whole, we see that the surtitles facilitated the audiences' experience for participants with lower French proficiency as well those with higher French proficiency, even for participants whose first language is French (or both French and English), as well as for some participants who indicated not having used the surtitles. It is also

important to note that overall, the surtitles did not negatively influence the experience for those with higher French proficiency who did not have recourse to the surtitles as often as others.

To further discern the audiences' impression of surtitles, the participants were asked if they had attended a subtitled performance prior to the performance that they had seen within the framework of this study and were also asked if they would consider attending a theatre performance with surtitles again. Nearly half (48%) of the participants who used and who did not use the surtitles had never attended a subtitled theatre performance, while 41% of participants had attended a subtitled production a few times, and 11% had attended subtitled productions often.

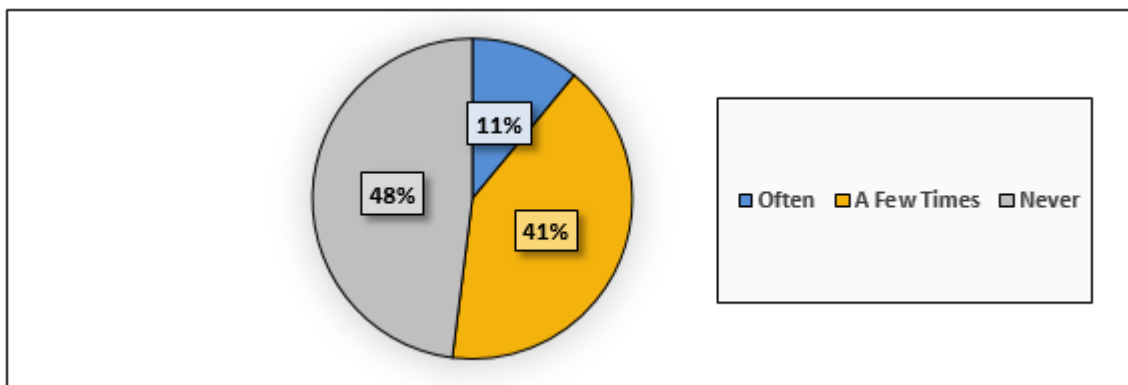


Figure 37: Participants Who Had Attended a Subtitled Performance Prior to Participating in the Study (Those Who Used and Did Not Use the Surtitles)

The majority of participants indicated that they would “definitely” attend a subtitled production again, with 77% of overall participants choosing this category. These responses were provided by participants from all L1 groups (English, Other, French and English and French) with varying degrees of French language fluency.

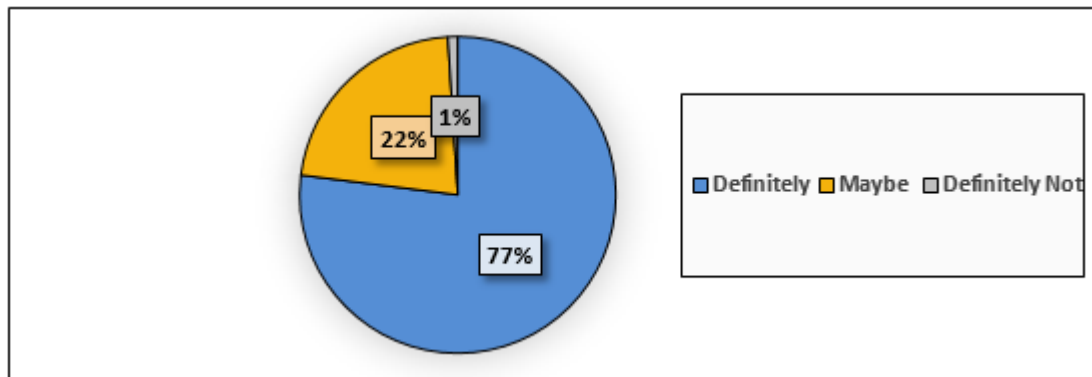


Figure 38: Participants Who Would Consider Attending a Subtitled Theatre Production Again (Those Who Used and Did Not Use the Surtitles)

Among the 22% participants who selected that they would “maybe” attend a subtitled theatre production again, there was a higher concentration of responses from participants with a higher French language proficiency and a lower concentration of responses from participants with a lower French language proficiency, although the responses were also provided by participants from all L1 groups with varying degrees of French language fluency. The subtitles are certainly less of a necessity for those whose French language abilities are advanced, which is undoubtedly why many participants with a higher French language proficiency selected this option. Only 1% of overall participants, including those who did not use the subtitles, indicated that they would “definitely not” attend a subtitled theatre performance again. These were two participants from the French and English L1 and the French L1 groups.

The benefits of the subtitles are further evidenced by the survey results regarding the language learning potentials of the subtitles. The results in the following section also help determine the cultural impact of the subtitles on audience members in this minority Francophone context.

4.3.d.) Language Learning Potentials of Subtitles and Cultural Implications

The participants were asked whether or not they found the subtitles helpful for learning the French language and/or about the French(-Canadian) culture. Among the overall participants who used the subtitles, 71% indicated that they were helpful, while 29% did not find the subtitles to be helpful.⁴²

⁴² It is important to take into account that there were more English L1 participants compared to the remaining language groups. (53%- English L1; 18%- Other L1; 17%-French L1; 12%-French and English L1)

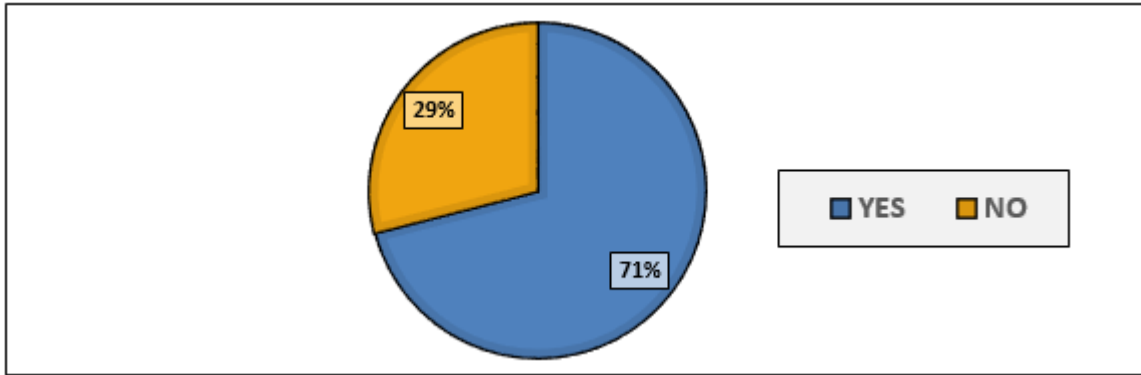


Figure 39: Participants Who Found the Surtitles Helpful for Learning the French Language and/or Culture According to the Total Number of Participants Who Used the Surtitles

As portrayed on the graph below, the majority of English L1, Other L1 and French and English L1 participants indicated that the surtitles were helpful for learning the French language and/or about the French(-Canadian) culture, while the majority of the French L1 participants indicated that the surtitles were not helpful.

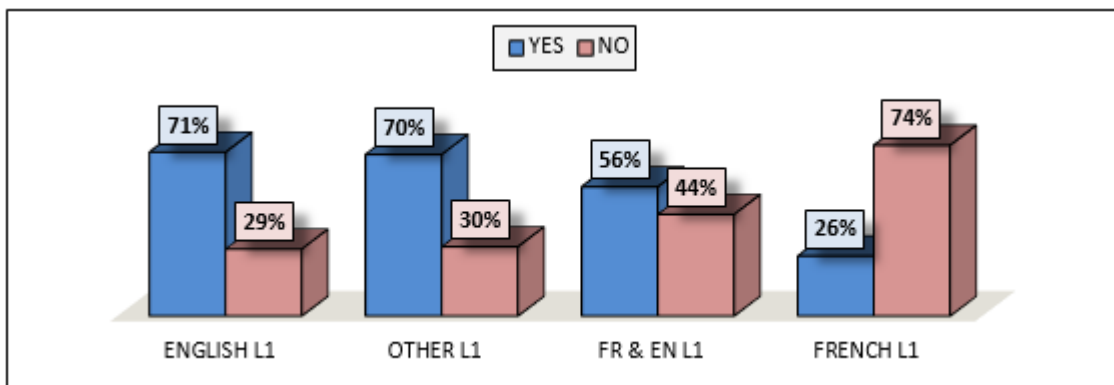


Figure 40: Participants Who Found the Surtitles Helpful or Not for Learning the French Language and/or French(-Canadian) Culture According to L1 Groups

Among the participants who used the surtitles, those who found them helpful for learning French and/or about the French(-Canadian) culture were primarily participants with low French proficiency, whereas the majority of those who indicated that the surtitles were not helpful were participants with higher levels of French proficiency. This is logical, since participants with high levels of French fluency already have thorough knowledge of the French language and French and/or French-Canadian culture and additionally, do not need to rely on the surtitles.

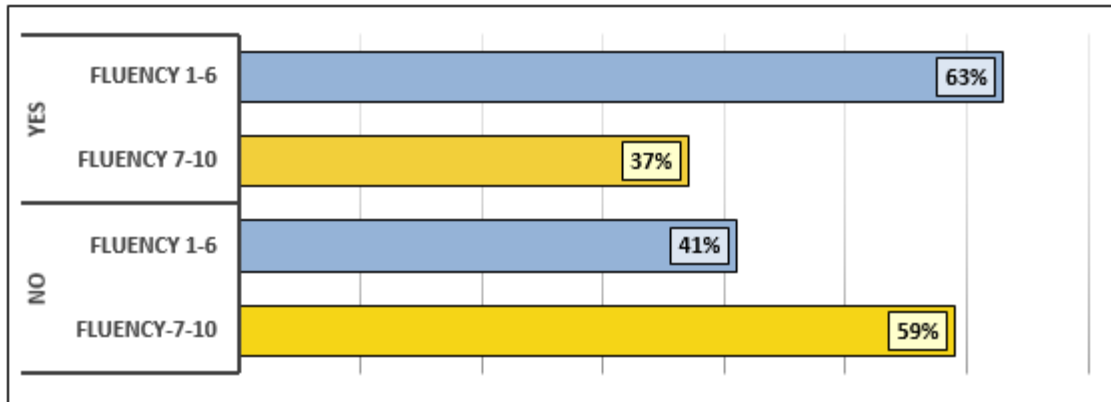


Figure 41: Participants Who Found the Surtitles Helpful for Learning the French Language and/or French(-Canadian) Culture According to French Language Proficiency (Participants Who Used the Surtitles)

The graph below depicts the distribution of French language proficiency for each first language group according to the number of participants who used the surtitles and found them helpful for learning the French language and/or about the French(-Canadian) culture. The majority of English L1 participants had self-rated French fluency ratings from 1 to 4 (beginner), the greater majority of the Other L1 participants had fluency ratings from 5 to 6 and 7 to 10 (intermediate-advanced), while most the of the French and English L1 participants had ratings from 7 to 10 (advanced) and all French L1 participants had ratings of 10 (advanced/fluent).

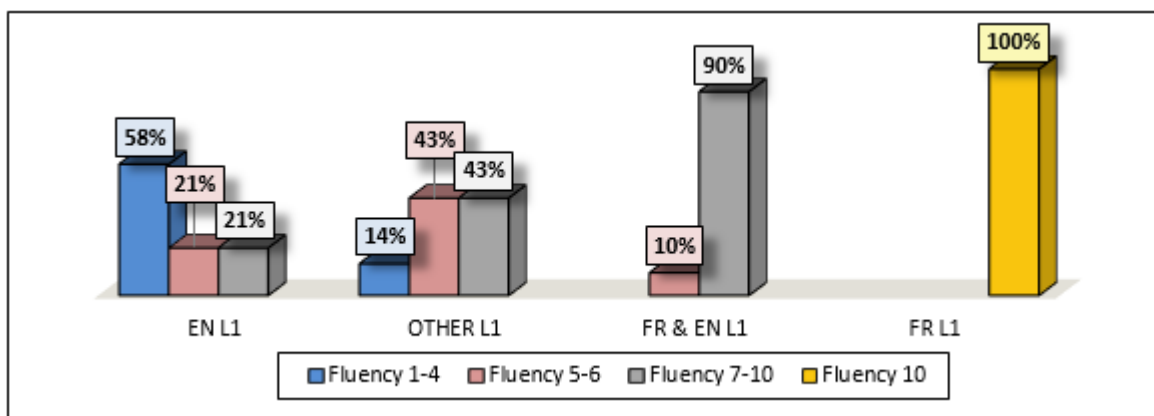


Figure 42: Distribution of French Language Fluency per L1 Group - Participants Who Found the Surtitles Useful for Learning the French Language and/or Culture

The participants were asked to specify why they found the surtitles to be helpful for language learning, or why not. The comments provided by the English L1 and Other L1 participants who agreed were quite similar in nature and there were many pertinent comments made regarding the

benefit of the surtitles for learning French or about the culture. There was no clear distinction between the participants' French language fluency and the type of comments that were made.

The most common comment provided was that the surtitles helped with listening comprehension and were helpful for learning new French vocabulary or (Quebecois) expressions because the surtitles helped with pairing the French words spoken on stage with their English counterparts in the surtitles. During the focus group with the participants who saw a performance of *Jean et Béatrice*, when asked whether there were certain words that the participants learned and retained while watching the subtitled play, one participant shared that yes, there were some words, but she emphasized that the surtitles contributed more so to her understanding of French pronunciation. Several other participants agreed with this comment. This participant explained the following: "I remember one example when he said: 'On s'tait' and I was like: 'Oh, I didn't know that you say it just like that'. [...] It was interesting. On se tait. Like, I didn't even know that that meant "shut up". And I was like: 'Oh, I learned something new'." Similarly, there was also one participant who explained in the survey that the surtitles helped them understand the French pronunciation (Other L1, French fluency 2), while three participants noted that they were helpful for understanding the Quebecois accent (English L1, French fluency 5; Other L1, French fluency 8). Several participants explained that the surtitles were a good way to test their comprehension, serving as confirmation that their comprehension was correct or clarifying doubts about their comprehension. For instance, one participant shared during the focus group that there were moments where they simply had recourse to the English surtitles while listening to the French dialogue and that this "added to [their] competency of the language". Another participant explained the following in the survey: "it was [...] good practice to try and understand the French dialogues on my own and look up [to] the surtitles if I was not able to do so successfully" (Other L1, French fluency 5). Another participant explained that the surtitles helped with understanding complex phrases (English L1, French fluency 7) and another noted that they helped with understanding French syntax, explaining the following: "It was interesting to see how the sentences were put together. [...] The structure of the sentences were interesting to me (words that come first in French but in English it is opposite)" (English L1, French fluency 2). A participant also commented that the surtitles allowed them to experience "the rhythms and emotional intonations in French" (English L1, French fluency 1). Another shared that "it was interesting to see how French intonation and humour work" and that the surtitles provide "another opportunity

to be exposed to another language in a "natural" way" (English L1, French fluency 1). A similar comment was made in this regard, with a participant sharing that they "learned colloquial usages of French not seen in classrooms" (English L1, French fluency 5). Additionally, during the focus group, a participant noted how subtitles are an advantage for those who are more advanced language learners: "if you're more advanced, going to a play is kind of good, because when you're talking in real life, that's how it's going to be, and so it's a really good way to train your ear too." In other words, this participant emphasized that subtitles serve a positive function, helping learners with their listening comprehension skills in a situation of authentic language input.

Some participants noted the benefits of subtitles for gaining "an insight into the culture" (English L1, French fluency 1), or as a means of "transmission of culture" (English L1, French fluency 5). As one participant noted "art is a strong reflection of culture" and the subtitles provided them the opportunity to be "exposed to theatre that [they] otherwise would not have seen" (English L1, French fluency 1). One participant also shared that they "enjoyed feeling a sense of inclusion via this method of language sharing" (English L1, French fluency 1). The subtitles also seemed to have provided certain participants with a certain level of confidence. The following comments were made in this regard:

- 1.) "I was pleased to notice that I was able to understand" (English L1, French fluency 3).
- 2.) "The experience was a pleasing personal growth opportunity" (English L1, French fluency 3).

Participants from the French and English L1 group explained that the subtitles helped at times for clarifying unfamiliar manners of speech or colloquialisms and some stated that the subtitles helped expand their French vocabulary. Of the few comments provided by these participants, one explained that because they speak France French, the subtitles help them familiarise themselves with Quebecois French. One participant explained that they enjoyed the fact that some of the French culture-specific terms were not adapted in the translation; they "found it quite nice" because this meant there was "not so much distance between Anglophones and the culture portrayed in the play" (French L1, Fluency 10).

The graph below depicts the distribution of French language proficiency for each first language group according to the number of participants who used the subtitles and did not find them helpful for learning the French language and/or about the French(-Canadian) culture. The

majority of English L1 participants had French fluency ratings from 1 to 4 (beginner), while the majority of participants from the Other L1, French and English L1 and French L1 groups had fluency ratings from 7 to 10 (advanced).

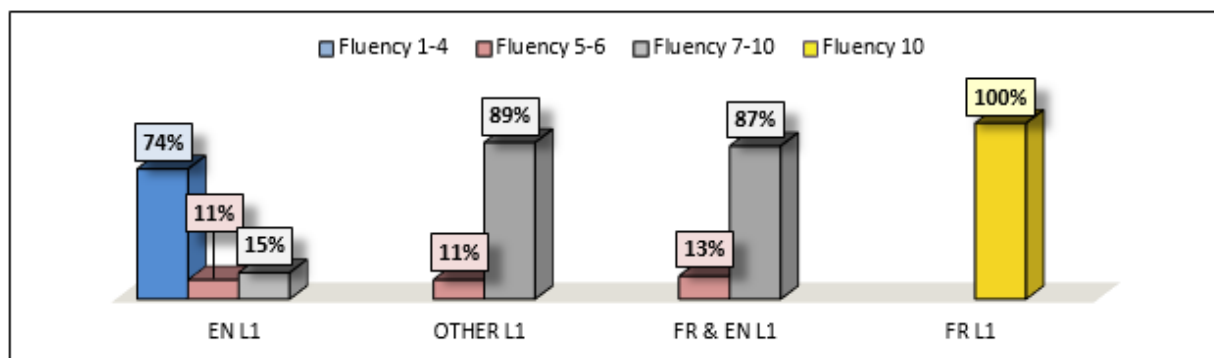


Figure 43: Distribution of French Language Fluency per L1 Group - Participants Who Did Not Find the Subtitles Useful for Learning the French Language and/or Culture

Participants from the English L1 group with low levels of French proficiency noted that they could not understand enough of the French dialogue to enable them to learn, and many explained the speed of dialogue was too rapid for learning. Some of these participants explained they were not actively learning French and therefore did not make an effort, or have the motivation, to use the subtitles in this manner. For example, one participant commented that they “[were not] using them for language learning” (English L1, French fluency 4) and another shared the following: “I don't think I was making an effort to. If I was trying to I probably would have” (English L1, French fluency 2). Those with higher levels of proficiency explained that they understood most of the French and therefore, the subtitles did not help them with learning the language.

The participants from the Other L1 group also shared they did not need to rely on the subtitles to understand and that the subtitles did not help for learning the French language. One participant explained that the subtitles helped improve their knowledge of English (Other L1, French fluency 9) and a couple of participants noted that the subtitles “would be helpful for anyone not familiar with the language or culture” (Other L1, French fluency 8). All of the French and English L1 and French L1 participants explained that they are fluent enough to understand the performance without the subtitles and therefore, did not find the subtitles helpful for learning the language and/or about the culture.

The participants were also asked whether or not it would benefit them if there were surtitles available in French during a French performance. A total of 66% of all participants who used and did not use the surtitles claimed that it would benefit them if there were French surtitles. Again, the comments provided by participants from the English L1 and Other L1 groups were quite similar in nature. A total of 61% of the English L1 participants who answered that it would benefit them if there were surtitles in French during a French performance had self-rated French fluency ratings from 1 to 6 and 39% of these participants had ratings from 7 to 10, while 43% of the Other L1 participants had fluency ratings from 5 to 6 and 57% of these participants had ratings from 7-9. The most frequent comment provided by these participants was that French surtitles would help with providing a visual reference of the French they were hearing on stage that this would be beneficial for learning vocabulary, pronunciation, and/or grammatical structures. Many of these participants noted that the actors' accents and rapid speech were factors that caused interference with their ability to understand the French dialogue, but that having the visual reference would be quite beneficial. For example, the following comments were shared:

- 1.) "It would benefit with learning because it would allow me to visualise the words and grammar much easier" (English L1, French fluency 5).
- 2.) "I understand French more when I can see the text being spoken versus just hearing it" (Other L1, French fluency 4).
- 3.) "Definitely. Because as FSL speakers, we might not necessarily recognize the linking sound and all it is being said when spoken very fast" (Other L1, French fluency 6).
- 4.) "This helps in improving listening skills. As a French learner, I sometimes watch French materials with French surtitles to learn pronunciations [*sic*] /accents/liasons [*sic*] that are of native French sound" (Other L1, French fluency 5).

The next most frequent comment made by these participants is that having French surtitles would help them with their French reading comprehension. Some participants with higher French proficiency levels explained that this method would be the most beneficial for them because it was simply due to the accent spoken or the speed of the dialogue that they, at times, had difficulty understanding. For instance, the following comments were made:

- 1.) "I prefer this method because for me as an Anglophone who speaks French it was just the accent/speed/pronunciation that I struggled with not necessarily the content" (English L1, French fluency 8).

- 2.) “Sometimes it might have just been the Quebecois accent that I couldn't understand. Surtitles in French would have helped me improve my French” (English L1, French fluency 8).

Similarly, some participants from the French and English L1 group who indicated that French surtitles would be beneficial – of which all participants had French fluency ratings from 7 to 10, with the exception of one (French fluency 6) – also explained that French surtitles would be helpful when there is rapid dialogue. One participant noted that they “don’t get much exposure to French colloquial speech so it would be helpful to see it in context and to see how it is written out” (French and English L1, French fluency 8). Even those from the French L1 (fluency 10) group commented that depending on the accent and expressions used, as well as the speed of dialogue, French surtitles could be beneficial. The remaining French and English L1 and French L1 participants did not answer from a personal point of view, but rather from the perspective of a French language learner, explaining that they thought the surtitles would probably be beneficial to these types of audience members.

Among the English L1 participants who indicated that French surtitles would not be beneficial, 88% of participants had French fluency ratings of 1 to 4, and the remaining 22% of participants had ratings of 5 to 8. Most of these participants explained that they “don’t speak French” or that their French reading proficiency is too limited to be able to make use of French surtitles. Two participants saw the potential benefit of having French surtitles for those who are for learning French, sharing the following comments:

- 1.) “I'm not trying to learn French, if I were it would be helpful” (English L1, fluency 1).
- 2.) “I don't speak French and am not in the process of learning it/taking classes at this time, but if I was looking to learn it French surtitles would be helpful for that” (English L1, French fluency 3).

The Other L1 participants did not leave many comments for this question, however one participant noted that “it is quicker to understand in English” (Other L1, French fluency 8) and another noted that there would be no need to French surtitles, since they can understand the language spoken on stage (Other L1, French fluency 10).

The participants from the French and English L1 and French L1 groups who indicated that having French surtitles would not be beneficial all noted that there was no need since they could understand the language spoken on stage perfectly well. There was one comment in

particular which stood out from the Francophone responses, with one participant displaying dismay at the proposition of French surtitles being displayed, having shared the following comment: “Pourquoi des surtitres en français -- Notre théâtre est un théâtre francophone” (French and English L1, French fluency 10). This leads to the cultural implications of the surtitles.

The participants were asked if they had any other comments about the surtitles (opinions about surtitles, precisions about the questions asked, etc.). Similar to the comment above, there were some participants, albeit very few, who expressed their opposition to the use of (English) surtitles in this minority Francophone theatre environment:

FRENCH & ENGLISH L1 and FRENCH L1 COMMENTS
- “Je suis complètement contre les surtitres. C'est un théâtre FRANCOPHONE...avec octrois comme tel. Les anglophones ont une dizaine de théâtre à Edmonton. Les surtitres en un mot, je les qualifie d' <u>érosion</u> de notre <u>culture</u> (ça commence avec des surtitres).” (Group 1, French and English L1, French fluency 10) ⁴³
- “Je suis sans un théâtre FRANCOPHONE. Nulle [<i>sic</i>] besoin d'avoir de l'Anglais.” (Group 1, French L1, French fluency 10)

Table 28: Francophone Participants Comments Expressing Opposition to the Use of (English) Surtitles

According to these two Francophone participants, there is no place for the presence of the English language in such an establishment, especially since *L'UniThéâtre* is a Francophone theatre company and there exist many theatre options for Anglophones in Edmonton. Quite evidently, these participants are concerned that the presence of English will lead to the erosion of the French language and culture within the Francophone communities of Edmonton/Alberta.

Although they did not express opposition to the surtitles, one Francophone participant explained that they felt that the choice of not including French surtitles during the performance of *Tubby et Nottubby* gave the impression that *L'UniThéâtre* is looking to attract Anglophones while disregarding the Francophones who are its primary patrons:

⁴³ This comment was made by the same participant who made the previous comment above.

FRENCH L1 COMMENTS

- "[P]uisque L'UniThéâtre est une troupe francophone, on s'attend à ce qui y est présenté soit en français. Je trouve donc injuste envers les francophones qui y vont lorsque le spectacle est en partie en anglais et qui auraient peut-être de la difficulté à comprendre cette langue de ne pas avoir égalité de surtitrage, c'est-à-dire, surtitres en anglais pour les anglophones quand le texte est en français et surtitres en français pour les francophones quand le texte est en anglais. Ceci occasionnerait évidemment plus de travail de traduction, mais au moins certains ne pourraient plus dire que notre théâtre francophone cherche seulement à attirer les anglophones et ne se préoccupe plus autant des francophones !" (Group 1, French L1, French fluency 10).

Table 29: Francophone Participant Comment About Not Preserving the Bilingual Aspect in the Surtitles for *Tubby et Nottubby*

Comments such as these highlight the delicate nature of surtitling in minority Francophone contexts such as Edmonton, Alberta, where many Francophones are making (and must make) active and conscious efforts to maintain their language and culture. This is an indication that some members of the Francophone community are ardent defenders of their language and culture and view the predominance of English as a threat to its preservation.

Despite these few comments, there were many positive remarks made by Francophone participants with regard to the surtitles. It is interesting to note that most of the comments were provided by Group 1 (i.e. non-recruited) participants, which means that the majority of the following comments are the opinions of *L'UniThéâtre*'s natural audience.

The predominant comment made by French L1 participants, and one French and English L1 participant, is that they appreciate the surtitles as they enable their Anglophone friends to attend and enjoy a production in French. Some French and English L1 participants noted that the surtitles added to their overall comprehension of the performance and helped them gain further insight into the nuances of the play, while one French L1 participant explained that the surtitles paradoxically helped improve their English.

FRENCH L1 COMMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Honnêtement j'adore les surtitres pour permettre à des anglophones de voir les pièces. J'ai plusieurs amis Anglophones qui comprennent un peu le français mais pas assez pour suivre une pièce de théâtre pendant 60 à 90 minutes. Les surtitres leur permet [sic] d'y arriver. C'est génial" (Group 1, French L1, French fluency 10). - "Pour moi, venir à L'UniThéâtre c'est assister à une pièce pas comme les autres. J'attache autant d'importance à la pièce qu'aux surtitres. C'est sûr que cela m'empêche de me concentrer pleinement sur la pièce mais cela m'importe peu. En fait, en tant que francophone, les surtitres me permettent paradoxalement d'améliorer mon anglais" (Group 1, French L1, French fluency 10). - "C'est un bel outil pour mettre à l'aise un spectateur qui ne parle qu'une des deux langues officielles" (Group 1, French L1, French fluency 10). - "Bien apprécié" (Group 1, French L1, French fluency 10).
FRENCH & ENGLISH L1 COMMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "J'aime aller au théâtre avec des amis anglophones. Ils aiment faire l'expérience d'être dans un contexte francophone et de comprendre en anglais" (Group 1, French and English L1, French fluency 10). - "I think that the subtitles were great! I feel like I better understood what the play was about and catch more subtitle things such as symbolism because I had a better idea as to what was going on" (Group 2, French and English L1, French fluency 4). - "Bien que je n'ai pas lu les surtitres, je reconnais qu'ils sont très importants à plusieurs niveaux ; D'abord ils ajoutent à la compréhension du texte. Ensuite, c'est un élément supplémentaire pour une analyse du texte" (Group 3, French and English L1, French fluency 10). - "Hopefully we will keep having them to attract more people to the French Plays!" (Group 1, French and English L1, French fluency 5).

**Table 30: Francophone Participant Comments
Expressing Positive Remarks About the Subtitles**

The English L1 participants wrote many favourable comments regarding their enjoyment in attending a subtitled French performance and their appreciation of the subtitles as a tool for expanding the audience and making Francophone theatre accessible and inclusive to the greater community.

ENGLISH L1 COMMENTS

- "I think it is a great idea and awesome for people learning how to speak one or the other language" (Group 2, English L1, French fluency 3).
- "I love the option they offer" (Group 1, English L1, French fluency 1).
- "I hope the theatre continues to use surtitles as I really enjoy going to see the plays there" (Group 1, English L1, French fluency 1).
- "I think they are terrific -- especially if they expand the audience" (Group 1, English L1, French fluency 8).
- "I commend the effort that went into the surtitles, and would recommend the experience to everyone. The use of surtitles at the opera has resulted in my wife and I going more often. The same would happen at the theatre" (Group 1, English L1, French fluency 8).
- "I like the idea of having surtitles, because it opens up the play to a whole other group of people who would not have been able to enjoy it before (i.e. not French speakers)" (Group 2, English L1, French fluency 8).
- "I really enjoyed being able to experience a French language play without having a background in French language or culture" (Group 1, English L1, French fluency 1).
- "In general, I like the idea of having surtitles, as it allows other people to enjoy the productions w[ho] might not have been able to before, much the same as subtitles in movies" (Group 2, English L1, French fluency 8).
- "I feel no theatre in Canada has the luxury of excluding any potential audience. The use of surtitles can only increase the appeal to more theatre-goers. It allows Francophones to bring their non-French speaking friends to performances and gives us the opportunity to experience a culture we wouldn't otherwise be able to access" (Group 1, English L1, French fluency 1).
- "I think you have made French theatre accessible to many more members of the community. I really enjoyed the performance and I hope to be able to attend more productions at L'UniThéâtre." (Group 1, English L1, French fluency 5).
- "I enjoyed the opportunity to see a play in French. The surtitles certainly made the play more comprehensible. I would attend such an event again. [...] As a theatre-going evening, for me it was no different than attending an English language play" (Group 2, English L1, French fluency 3).
- "My 2 main reasons for attending the subtitled performances are that my husband is Deaf, so these surtitles allow us to enjoy live theatre, and that I do understand quite a lot of French, but it's easy to get lost in a fast moving play, so the surtitles help me to stay on track, while also giving me some great practice and exposure to French. I think the surtitles are a wonderful way to include all patrons, Anglophones, couples where one is French and the other is not, people with hearing challenges, and those of us who know some French and would like to hear it in a Theatrical context. I think the surtitles are a wonderful way to be inclusive to all of the patrons. They allow people to attend who otherwise wouldn't or couldn't due to a language barrier or a barrier due to a hearing impairment" (Group 1, English L1, French fluency 4).
- "The surtitles helped make the play more accessible to me. Without them more of my attention would have been focused on trying to translate what I was hearing and lessened my enjoyment and appreciation for the actors' performances and the play itself" (Group 3, English L1, French fluency 3).

**Table 31: English L1 Participant Comments
Expressing Positive Remarks About the Surtitles**

The Other L1 participants did not leave many comments in the open-response sections of the survey. However, the participants who did write comments expressed similar opinions as the English L1 participants, explaining that the surtitles allow for greater accessibility and cross-cultural understanding.

OTHER L1 COMMENTS
<p>- "I really enjoy watching French performances, especially at the theater. Having been given the option to have surtitles in English to supplement my understanding of the performance is such a wonderful idea and I am really glad such a thing started to exist. I would love to watch more subtitled theater performances!" (Group 2, Other L1, French fluency 4).</p>
<p>- "I really liked the idea of surtitles. It does not only open up the performance to a larger audience, as an anthropology student, I can also say that it opens up a chance for a cross-cultural receptions and examinations of the performance and the literary materials for both the monolingual (French or English only speakers) and multilingual members of the audience. This can indirectly allow for the expansion of the meaning of the literary piece from what the authors and/or actors originally planned" (Group 2, Other L1, French fluency 5).</p>
<p>- "I really liked having the surtitles there. It made everything a lot easier and I happened to enjoy the performance more, while knowing what they were saying" (Group 2, Other L1, French fluency 2).</p>

**Table 32: Other L1 Participant Comments
Expressing Positive Remarks About the Surtitles**

These comments highlight the value that surtitles offer in terms of accessibility and inclusivity and their potential for promoting the French language and French(-Canadian) culture. According to the results covered in this section, the surtitles were beneficial on a variety of levels for different linguistic groups with varying levels of French proficiency. While the surtitles were especially helpful for beginner to intermediate French language learners in terms of listening comprehension, acquisition of vocabulary and expressions, understanding pronunciation and accents, clarifying syntax and exposing these types of audience members to authentic language input, the surtitles were also helpful for those with intermediate to moderately advanced Francophones and Francophiles, acting as a cognitive supplement for clarifying unknown words or expressions, reinforcing comprehension due to the speed of dialogue or accents spoken on stage and at times, helping with acquiring new English words or expressions. On a cultural level, the surtitles were also valued by Francophones and non-Francophones alike and were generally viewed positively as an inclusive and accessible means of sharing the language and culture.

Only 21% of all French L1 and French and English L1 participants left comments in the open-response section. While some Francophones communicated their disapproval of the surtitles, the disapproving comments represent 6% of the total French L1 and French and English

L1 participants, while the positive comments represent 15% of these participants. If we consider that 79% of these participants did not leave any comments regarding their appreciation or disapproval of the surtitles, it can be assumed that Francophones who disapprove of the use of English surtitles and the presence of English in this Francophone theatre environment represent but a small portion of the Francophone community who regularly attends performances at *L'UniThéâtre*. Had the surtitles been a contentious issue for many Francophone audience members, one would assume that they would have participated in this study to voice their opinions and points of view.

CHAPTER 5 – CONCLUSION: SUMMARY OF RESULTS & CLOSING REMARKS

Structured according to the issues outlined in Chapters 1, 2 and 3, this section outlines the main outcomes of this study with regard to the reception of the technical aspects of surtitles and the reception of surtitles overall in this Francophone minority context in Canada, as well as the potentials of surtitles for second-language learning, and serves to demonstrate how this study supports, advances or contradicts previously reported research.

A total of 179 survey responses were collected over the duration of this study, with 55 to 65 participants per play (*La Corneille*, *Tubby et Nottubby* and *Jean et Béatrice*) from various language backgrounds and with varying levels of French proficiency.

There are a number of revealing outcomes to this study. On a technical level, the results help to further define the limits and potentials of the technical aspects of surtitles and the framework for measuring the audience reception of surtitles developed in this study fills the current gap in existing research. On a sociolinguistic level, the results provide a clear portrait of how audience members from various language backgrounds and with varying levels of French proficiency make use of surtitles in this Francophone minority theatre context and also reveal that surtitles offer several benefits to language learners.

5.1.) Technical Aspects of Surtitles and Reception

One of the main goals of this study was to fill an existing gap in the current body of research on theatre surtitles by testing the technical aspects of surtitles on audiences in order to gain a better understanding of their impact on reception and to help further define the limits and potentials of theatre surtitles. As established in Chapter 1, technical aspects directly impact how the audience receives the subtitled product and can introduce several obstacles to reception. Measuring the reception of a subtitled performance thus entails consideration of the technical constraints imposed on the subtitled product and an evaluation of how these factors influence the audiences' ability to make use of the surtitles. The problematic of this study relates to the translation strategy chosen for the English surtitles for *L'UniThéâtre's* French productions. The strategy of condensed-direct translation (based on the concept of literal transfer) was assumed to result in more and longer surtitles, which was assumed might potentially increase the amount of

reading time required, subsequently decreasing readability and usability, while increasing the audience's cognitive load and causing interference with the audience's ability to focus their attention on stage.

Using Gambier's (2009) dimensions for research on AVT reception, adapted from Kovačič (1995) and Chesterman's (2007) research, as part of a framework for measuring the audience's reception of surtitles, two criteria were important to address for the quality assessment of the surtitles, namely the participants' *response* and *reaction* to the subtitled product. Recall that the audience's *response* to the subtitled performance is connected to their perceptual decoding ability, or in other words, the audience's ability to understand production as a whole, with both the visual and auditory references on stage and the textual reference in the surtitles, as well as their French language proficiency. In this study, it is assumed that, similar to the field of subtitling, the audience's response to a subtitled theatre production will depend on the impact of the cognitive environment on the audience's decoding process (their ability to understand the subtitled product) (Kovačič, 1995, p.376). The audience's *reaction* is connected to the psychocognitive issue (mental and emotional reactions to the surtitles and the performance) and the issue of readability. *Readability* has been defined as the ease of reading determined by the organization of information units and the typographic design of the surtitles overall, and the degree to which the information conveyed on the surtitle screen is comprehensible in terms of the content, meaning and quantity of text delivered (Perego & Ghia, 2011, p.178). A similar term to readability, *usability* (Gambier, 2006), as a measure of the effectiveness and efficiency of an AVT product and its consumers' satisfaction, has a broader application when measuring the overall reception of a subtitled product. The usability of the surtitles means that they are easy to use, satisfying, and user-oriented as well as cognitively effective and processed effortlessly. Another term that is being proposed here as being integrated into a framework for measuring the audience reception of surtitles is *accessibility* (Gambier, 2006) which is defined as being a barrier-free situation, where information is provided and easy to understand.

As a means of qualifying the effectiveness of the surtitles at *L'UniThéâtre*, relevance theory was chosen as an appropriate means for defining the usability of the surtitles. Within this framework, the audience's reaction to the subtitled product will depend on the efficiency of communication (Gambier, 2009). If the audience's processing effort is high, this will decrease the relevance of the surtitles and of the theatre performance overall.

The final element of the framework for measuring the reception of surtitles, as proposed in this study, is Gambier's (2009) variables for measuring the audience reception of subtitles. According to this model, it is important to address the sociological variables of the audience as well as audiovisual variables when measuring response and reaction, and to correlate these to features pertaining to technical aspects. For the purposes of this study, technical aspects were divided into two principal categories. The spatial parameters (layout and readability) of the surtitles include the positioning of the screen, text positioning, font colour and background, text brightness, typeface and distribution, number of lines, number of characters per line, textual features and punctuation, lexical density, syntactic complexity, semantic coherence and text segmentation. The temporal parameters (duration) include the display times of the surtitles and their synchronization with the dialogue on stage.

There were several relevant outcomes to this study with regard to the technical aspects of surtitles and their impact on the audience's reception. According to the qualitative results for all three plays, 100% of participants who did not use the surtitles rated the position of the screen as being "suitable", which leads to the conclusion that the surtitles were not a visual distraction for audience members who did not need to rely on them for comprehension. This is positive for the reception of these types of spectators, since those who have no use for the surtitles should not be distracted from the performance on stage. Therefore, the screen was placed at an appropriate height for all three productions for audience members who did not need the surtitles.

The proscenium stage at *L'Unithéâtre* is not raised, but on ground level. The centre of the screen for *La Corneille* was at a height of 12 feet, 2.75 inches from the stage floor, while the centre of the screen was at a height of 12 feet, 11 inches from the stage for *Jean et Béatrice* and 16 feet, 3 inches for *Tubby et Nottubby*. While the ratings of the screen position by participants who used the surtitles were generally positive, with 91% of participants rating the screen position suitable for *Jean et Béatrice*, 90% of participants for *La Corneille*, and 83% for *Tubby et Nottubby*, there were several comments regarding the desirability of having the screen placed lower. According to the comments made, placing the screen lower so as to have the surtitles closer to the vicinity of the actors would improve the viewing experience and overall reception of the subtitled production for those who need to rely on the surtitles, since this would reduce the distance the eyes have to travel between the stage and the surtitles. The results of the quantitative and qualitative analysis indicated that it is visually easier to focus on both the surtitle screen and

the action on stage the higher up one sits, especially when the stage is at ground level and when the screen is placed high from the stage. Sitting higher up reduces the angle and distance at which the eyes must travel between the screen and the action on stage. Based on comments provided by participants, the height of the surtitle screen from the stage influences the degree to which the audience's attention is divided between the textual information (the surtitles) and the visual information (the performance), resulting in a split-attention effect. While placing the screen lower may help to minimize this, it would impose a dichotomy between the needs of audience members who require the surtitles for comprehension and those audience members who do not need to use them. Additionally, surtitles should not affect the aesthetics of the production. Newer technologies such as Google Glass or using subtitles/entitles displayed on digital mobile devices would mediate this aesthetic issue, but may not solve the split-attention effect caused by sharing one's attention between the stage and screen. Evidently, the use of the subtitles displayed on tablets at *Le Cercle Molière* in Winnipeg, Manitoba works, since Anglophone audience members continue to attend subtitled productions at this theatre. It would be beneficial to conduct research on the audience reception of such modes of AVT, and if they are just efficient or more efficient in terms of usability and audience reception, then they should be exploited in these Francophone minority contexts, as well as traditional surtitling contexts.

The typeface used for the surtitles for all three productions was Arno Pro Caption, with a font size of 28. The shorter distance from the projector to the surtitle screen resulted in the text for *Jean et Béatrice* appearing larger on the screen. The participants' ratings for text size were all positive, with 98% of participants rating the text size as "suitable" for *La Corneille* and *Jean et Béatrice*, and 96% of participants for *Tubby et Nottubby*. The surtitle screen for *Tubby et Nottubby* was placed about 4 feet higher than the screen placements for the former two productions, which is likely why it received a slightly lower rating. It is possible that the text size of the surtitles appeared smaller for *Tubby et Nottubby* because of the height of the screen. It may be prudent to increase the text size if the screen is placed high above the stage to increase legibility and facilitate the audience's viewing experience.

The text positioning of the surtitles for all three productions was centre-aligned and centered on the screen. The surtitles were placed slightly lower on the screen for *Tubby et Nottubby* and *Jean et Béatrice* due to the position of the screen. The text positioning was rated 100% suitable by all participants who used the surtitles for all three productions. There was one

comment made regarding the fact that it would have facilitated the viewing experience if the text had been placed at the bottom of the screen to reduce the extent to which one must look up at the surtitles. If a surtitle screen is placed quite high above the stage, placing the text as close to the bottom of the screen as possible may facilitate the audience's reading process.

The text of the surtitles for all productions was white on a monochrome black background. The participants' ratings for the colour and brightness of the surtitles were positive for *La Corneille* and *Tubby et Nottubby*, with 100% of participants rating the colour and brightness as "suitable". The ratings for *Jean et Béatrice* were significantly lower, with 71% of participants rating the colour and brightness as "suitable" and 29% of participants rating them as "too dark". This was due to the type of projector used, which had a lower lumens output, in combination with the background window screen that was placed directly below the surtitle screen onto which sceneries were displayed. This created light pollution, reducing the brightness of the surtitles, affecting their legibility and negatively impacting their reception to a certain extent. It is important to not disregard elements such as light pollution and the type of projector used if the desire is to render a production accessible to a broader audience. The surtitles will not fulfil their purpose if elements such as light interference and/or reduced brightness impose obstacles to the intended target audience's reception of the performance. The surtitles should be considered as an integral part of the theatre production, just as the other elements of the *mise-en-scène*.

As outlined in section 1.2 and 2.2.a., there are currently no fixed conventions for the number of characters per surtitles. Existing research indicates that the number of characters can range from 70 to 140 characters per title, including spaces and punctuation. The average character counts per slide for the productions analyzed within the framework of this study fell within these parameters, with one-line surtitles consisting of 20 to 33 characters, two-line surtitles consisting of 50-63 characters and three-line surtitles consisting of 70 to 112 characters on average, while the split-dialogue surtitles for *Jean et Béatrice* consisted of an average of 59 characters per surtitle. The surtitles for *Jean et Béatrice* had the highest number of characters with 9% more characters than those for *La Corneille* and 64% more characters than those for *Tubby et Nottubby*. However, in relationship to the total amount of time the surtitles were displayed and the overall duration of the performance, the surtitles for *La Corneille* were the densest, with 10% more text than those for *Jean et Béatrice* and 34% more text than those for *Tubby et Nottubby*. The surtitles for *La Corneille* received the lowest rating for the amount of text contained in the surtitles, with

86% of participants rating the amount of text as “suitable” and 14% considering the surtitles as containing “too much text”. The ratings for *Tubby et Nottubby* and *Jean et Béatrice* were the same, even though the surtitles for the latter production contained much more text than the former, with 95% of participants rating the amount of text as “suitable”, 2% indicating there was too much text and 3% of participants indicating there was “too little” text. However, even though *La Corneille* received a lower rating for the amount of text contained in the surtitles, the surtitles for this play were not the most difficult to read.

Within the field of surtitling, display times remain unestablished and untested on audiences. According to Griesel’s research data (2005, 2007), theatre surtitles seem to intuitively last for 2 to 3 seconds, which the duration of a surtitle can vary significantly, from 1 to 20 seconds. The average display times of Griesel’s analysis (2007) of eight subtitled theatre productions were 4.1. to 6.3 seconds and on average the surtitles stayed on screen for an average 5.6 seconds per slide. The average character counts for one-line surtitles ranged from 24-45 characters, the average for two-line surtitles was 40-76 and the average for three-line surtitles was 58. The average character counts for the surtitles used within the framework of this present study were slightly lower in range for one- and two-line surtitles, and much higher for three-line surtitles, as depicted in the table below.

	Average Display Times	Number of Characters
One-line:	2.6 – 3 seconds	20-33
Two-lines:	4.3 – 5 seconds	50-63
Three-lines:	4.3 – 14 seconds	70-112

Table 33: Summary of Average Display Times and Number of Characters

The one- and two-line surtitles were displayed for approximately the same average duration for all three productions, although *La Corneille*’s one- and two-line surtitles consisted of the most characters. The three-line surtitles for *La Corneille* were displayed for twice as long on average as those for *Tubby et Nottubby* at an average of 14 seconds, and over three times longer than those for *Jean et Béatrice*, but consisted of the most characters, with almost 50% more characters than the three-line surtitles for *Jean et Béatrice*. Considering that the average reading speed ranges from 150-180 words per minute and that within the field of subtitled, the guideline for the presentation of titles is 175 words per minute, the results of this study also fall within these parameters, with the exception of the split dialogue surtitles for *Jean et Béatrice*:

Number of Lines	Display Times (WPM)
One-line:	90 - 132
Two-lines:	140 - 151
Three-lines:	96 – 196
Split-dialogue surtitles:	208

Table 34: Summary of Number of Lines and Reading Speed/Display Times

The surtitles for *La Corneille* were displayed at the highest reading speed for one-line surtitles (132 wpm) and two-line surtitles (151 wpm), while the three-line surtitles for *Jean et Béatrice* were displayed at the highest reading speed (196 wpm), however there were only a total of three three-line surtitles. The 22 split-dialogue surtitles for this production were displayed at an average reading rate of 208 wpm, which is much greater than the average reading speed of 150-180 wpm.

Number of Lines	Distribution of One-, Two- and Three-Line Surtitles (%), Average Character Count and Average Display Times (Seconds) / (WPM)		
	<i>La Corneille</i>	<i>Tubby et Nottubby</i>	<i>Jean et Béatrice</i>
One-line:	15%, 33 characters (3 secs / 132 wpm)	40%, 21 characters (2.8 secs / 90 wpm)	17.5%, 20 characters (2.6 secs / 92 wpm)
Two-lines:	58%, 63 characters (5 secs / 151 wpm)	57%, 50 characters (4.3 secs / 140 wpm)	80%, 53 characters (4.3 secs / 148 wpm)
Three-lines:	27%, 112 characters (14 secs / 96 wpm)	3%, 103 characters (7.1 secs / 165 wpm)	0.3%, 70 characters (4.3 secs / (196 wpm)
Split-dialogue surtitles:	-	-	2.2%, 59 characters (3.4 secs / 208 wpm)

Table 35: Summary of Number of Lines, Distribution of One-, Two- and Three-Line Surtitles (%), Average Character Count and Average Reading Speed/Display Times

The surtitles for *Jean et Béatrice* consisted of 80% two-line surtitles displayed at an average speed of 148 wpm, 17.5% one-line surtitles displayed at an average speed of 92 wpm, and 22 split-dialogue surtitles (2.2% of total surtitles) displayed at an average speed of 208 wpm. Those for *La Corneille* consisted of 58% two-line surtitles displayed at an average speed of 151 wpm and 27% three-line surtitles displayed at an average of 96 wpm, while the surtitles for *Tubby et Nottubby* consisted of 57% two-line surtitles displayed at an average of 140 wpm and 40% one-line surtitles displayed at an average of 90 wpm.

When it comes to the participants' reading time ratings, *Jean et Béatrice* was the play that posed most difficulty to the reading process. Only 42% of participants indicated that they were

able to read all of the surtitles, while 54% of participants indicated that they “sometimes” did not have enough time to read them and 4% of participants did not have enough time to read them. The surtitles were easier to read for *La Corneille*, with 61% of participants indicating that they had enough time to read the surtitles, 37% claiming they “sometimes” did not have enough time to read them, and 2% indicating they did not have enough time. The surtitles were easiest to read for *Tubby et Nottubby*, with a total of 69% of participants indicating that they had enough time to read the surtitles, while 31% “sometimes” did not have enough time to read the surtitles and 2% did not have enough time to read them. These results indicate that the participants had the most difficulty keeping up with the pace of the surtitles for *Jean et Béatrice*, but in addition to the density of the surtitles and the display times, there were other factors that influenced their ability to read the surtitles. Several participants commented that in addition to the amount and speed of dialogue, the reduced brightness of the text and the lively action on stage were factors which required increased effort to share their attention between the surtitles and the performance on stage. This indicates that an audience’s ability to read surtitles is not simply determined by the amount of characters contained in the surtitles and the amount of time they are displayed on the screen. It also matters what is occurring on stage, how rapid the dialogue is delivered as well as the amount of time surtitles are displayed in relationship to the total duration of the performance. For instance, participants perceived the surtitles for *La Corneille* as containing too much text, which may be due to the fact that this production contained the most surtitles in relationship to the total duration of the performance. In other words, the surtitles were most present over the course of the performance as opposed to the other two productions. However, the surtitles for *Jean et Béatrice* were the most challenging to read.

While the surtitles for *Tubby et Nottubby* received the highest ratings for reading time (69%) from overall participants, the Group 3 participants who attended all three productions considered the surtitles for *La Corneille* as being easiest to read in comparison to the other two productions, citing reasons such as the fact that the set was simple and the action on stage was more stationary, making it easier to focus on both the surtitles and the action, the text being more concise and faithful with the dialogue and action on stage, better synchronized surtitles, the speed of speech being slower and the fact that there was usually one speaker per surtitle.

This is evidence that it may not be possible to make fixed and definitive rules regarding minimum and maximum display times and the amount of characters per surtitle. For instance, the

one-line surtitles for *La Corneille* were displayed at an average speed of 132 wpm, compared to those for *Jean et Béatrice*, which were displayed at an average speed of 92 wpm. The two-line surtitles for *La Corneille* were displayed at an average speed of 151 wpm, while those for *Jean et Béatrice*, were displayed at an average speed of 148 wpm. Even though the surtitles for *La Corneille* were displayed at a faster reading speed, the surtitles for *Jean et Béatrice* were perceived as more difficult to read due to the dynamic nature of the performance, which included a visually complex set design in addition to a lot of action on stage, as well as quick exchanges between the actors and interrupted speech (split-dialogue surtitles). This is further evidence that the action on stage and the extent of set design and effects can impede upon the reception of the surtitles. More cognitive input results in more aspects to focus on and subsequently increases the extent to which the audience's attention is split between the performance and the surtitles. Additionally, there was the factor of the reduced dimness of the surtitles for *Jean et Béatrice*. The surtitles for *La Corneille* were perceived by Group 3 participants as easiest to read because there was usually one speaker per surtitle, the action on stage was more stationary, the set design was simpler, and the text was more "faithful" to the production because the pace of the dialogue allowed for less condensation of the text, as compared to the surtitles for *Jean et Béatrice*. The Group 3 participants rated *Tubby et Nottubby*'s surtitles as being the next easiest to read, citing seating position, the amount of text, and the brightness and position of the text as factors which facilitated the reading process.

Based on these results, it becomes evident that it is important to consider the dynamic nature of the performance when creating surtitles. If there is a lot of movement and action on stage, as well as rapid dialogue, this may require further condensation of the surtitles to facilitate the audience's viewing and reading experience. In order to increase the reading time available and to maximize the amount of time the audience can focus their attention on stage, it may be prudent to display surtitles one second before the actor's speech and one second after. Other factors such as text brightness, the text position and the height of screen can also affect the readability and usability of the surtitles.

The reading time ratings were not the most optimal, however one limit of these results is the ambiguity of the option "sometimes". From the qualitative results, it would seem that the number of times participants did not have enough time to read the surtitles was rather infrequent for all three productions. According to the overall results and comments, the participants were

able to manage reading the surtitles while devoting their attention to the action on stage, albeit some instances where the text was too dense for the length of time certain surtitles were displayed. However, for some participants, the reading process was more challenging. Certain participants claimed they spent a lot of time, or almost all of their time, reading the surtitles and some found that although they managed to read all of the surtitles, they were unable to be as invested in the play as they usually would be without the use of them, as their attention to the visual information was compromised by reading the surtitles. It would be beneficial to conduct a study on audience reading abilities according to their reading aptitudes to gain a better understanding of an audience's reading habits. Eye tracking studies would be useful, but unfortunately, since theatre is presented live, this makes it challenging to conduct such studies.

Since the reading time available to the audience was not always optimal, it is recommended that surtitles be displayed at an average reading speed of no more than 175 wpm and less whenever possible. In order to cater to all reading aptitudes, surtitles might ideally be presented at 150-160 wpm. Most of the surtitles for all three productions were presented at less than 175 wpm and some participants had difficulty reading the surtitles. The reading speed is dependent on the number of characters per surtitle in relationship to the amount of time a surtitle is displayed. According to past research and the results of this study, the following display times are being suggested as being appropriate: one-line surtitles consisting of 20-30 characters, including spaces and punctuation, should be displayed for no less than 3 seconds, while the appropriate display time for two-line surtitles consisting of 50-60 characters should be displayed for approximately 5 seconds. Three-line surtitles consisting of 70-80 characters should be displayed for a minimum of 7 seconds, while three-line surtitles with 90 to 115 characters should be displayed for at least 8 to 9 seconds. Of course, due to the live aspect of surtitles, it is not possible to maintain consistent display times as the rate of speech will vary from one performance to the next.

The participant ratings for their ability to link the surtitles to the correct speaker on stage were also not the most optimal, with 75% of participants who saw *La Corneille* rating that they could “easily”, link the surtitles to the correct speakers on stage and 25% of participants who could link the surtitles to the actors “reasonably well”, while only 63% for both *Tubby et Nottubby* and *Jean et Béatrice* indicated they could do so “easily” and 37% could do so “reasonably well”. It may have been easier for audience members to link the surtitles to the correct speaker on stage

for the performance of *La Corneille*, due to the fact that there was often only one speaker per surtitle, the speed of dialogue was slower paced and the dialogue less complex, and because there was much less action on stage compared to the other two productions. The split-dialogue surtitles used to represent the interrupted segments of speech in *Jean et Béatrice* generally worked well, as there were few comments made by participants in regard to these. However, they created some level of confusion for some participants, making it difficult to link the surtitles to the appropriate speaker on stage. Colour-coding the surtitles would have resolved this issue. It would be beneficial to conduct comparative studies on surtitles that are colour-coded, and those that are not, to determine whether colour-coded surtitles assist audience members with linking surtitles to the appropriate speaker. There is also the question of whether colour-coded surtitles would be a visual distraction for those who do not need to rely on them. With regards to *Tubby et Nottubby*, the improvisation and bilingual aspect negatively affected the synchronization of the surtitles and this may have had an influence on the audience's ability to link the surtitles to the correct speaker.

The results were also analyzed according to participants' French language proficiency, however according to the results, there was no correlation between French language proficiency and the participants' ability to link the surtitles to the correct speaker on stage.

The ratings for the synchronization of the surtitles were also not the most optimal. A total of 76% of participants who saw *La Coreille* indicated that the surtitles were synchronized with the dialogue on stage "all the time", while 74% of participants who saw *Jean et Béatrice* and only 59% of participants who saw *Tubby et Nottubby* considered the surtitles to be synchronized "all the time". As mentioned, the improvisation and bilingual aspects affected the synchronization of the surtitles for *Tubby et Nottubby*. Surtitles are presently incompatible with improvisation, and for this reason, improvisation should be discouraged when surtitles are being used, since the absence of and/or inaccuracy of the surtitles during improvised sections distracts audience members from the performance. If a production includes planned improvisation, it would be beneficial to display a surtitle alerting the TA that the scene is improvised (i.e. *Improvisation*) so that the audience members do not become distracted by thinking there is a technical issue with the surtitles. Some participants who saw *La Corneille* and *Tubby et Nottubby* commented that they found that the jokes were at times prematurely delivered in the surtitles, which made them feel embarrassed if they laughed before everyone else in the audience. In the case of jokes, the

surtitles should be displayed seconds after the joke is delivered, so that the TA is not receiving the punch line before the general audience.

As for the content and accuracy of the surtitles, most participants rated these aspects positively, regardless of their fluency in French. The participants with low French language proficiency had enough confidence in the surtitles to rate the content and accuracy positively. The non-linguistic and semiotic aspects and the synchronization of the surtitles were likely contributing factors which enhanced their confidence. Most participants who used the surtitles evaluated the content positively for each production, with 73% of all participants who use the surtitles for *La Corneille*, 69% of participants who saw *Tubby et Nottubby* and 77% of participants who saw *Jean et Béatrice* having indicated that the surtitles contained “everything necessary”. A certain number of participants found that the surtitles contained “some deficiencies” with a total of 25% of participants who saw *La Corneille*, 31% of participants who saw *Tubby et Nottubby* and 23% of participants who saw *Jean et Béatrice*. There were minimal comments made by participants with regard to the content of the surtitles. One participant noted the deficiencies were minimal and were related to punctuation, capitalization and spacing. There were several comments made regarding the lack of surtitles during the opening scene of *Jean et Béatrice*. Similar to what occurred during *Tubby et Nottubby*, when there were no surtitles displayed during improvised segments of the performance, this distracted audience members and was a hindrance to those who needed the surtitles to understand the ST and furthermore, this was perceived as a technical error, which further distracted these audience members. As previously mentioned, the surtitles are an integral part of the mise-en-scène of a production. The performance should be accessible to all audience members, which means that the surtitles need to cater to the TA’s communicative needs and should not be omitted. In the case of *Tubby et Nottubby*, the deaf participant’s communicative needs were not met, due to the bilingual nature of the performance and the fact that the surtitles were only present during French portions of dialogue.

The majority of participants who used the surtitles rated the accuracy of the surtitles positively, with a total of 93% of participants who saw *La Corneille*, 94% of participants who saw *Tubby et Nottubby* and 96% of participants who saw *Jean et Béatrice* agreeing that the surtitles conveyed the dialogue spoken on stage. The ratings were positive for all L1 groups (English L1, French L1, French & English L1, Other L1). Most of the comments made regarding the translation were positive. Some English L1 participants noted that there were times when the

translations were inaccurate to what was said on stage. These were times when the actors deviated from the script, which gave certain participants the impression that there were errors in the translation. This is the disadvantage of the live nature of surtitling. The few comments made highlight that the surtitles will be judged as erroneous when there are discrepancies between the ST and the surtitled TT. Had the surtitles been further condensed, it is likely that there would have been more comments made by participants regarding the accuracy of the surtitles. The lack of comments made regarding the accuracy of the surtitles indicates that the strategy of literal transfer served its intended purpose, as audience members were generally not distracted by the translation.

The clarity of the surtitles was rated positively for all three productions, with 98% of participants for *La Corneille*, and 95% of participants for both *Tubby et Nottubby* and *Jean et Béatrice* indicating that the surtitles were “easy to understand”. This is evidence that the syntactic complexity, the semantic coherence, the lexical density and the segmentation of the surtitles facilitated the viewing experience.

The surtitles had either a positive or neutral influence on the audience’s theatre experience. Overall, the surtitles facilitated the audience’s theatre experience, with 72% of overall participants who used the surtitles indicating that the surtitles “made it easier” and 25% of participants found that the surtitles had “no influence” on their experience. For the most part, these were Francophone participants. Only 3% of overall participants found the surtitles to be disruptive. The 7% of participants who did not make use of the surtitles indicated that the surtitles either had no influence on their experience, or facilitated their experience. Furthermore, 77% of overall participants indicated that they would “definitely”, and 22% indicated that they would “maybe” attend a surtitled production again.

Considering these results, the participants’ response and reaction to the surtitles was generally positive. The readability and usability of the surtitles were, at times, compromised by certain aspects such as screen height, improvisation (*Tubby et Nottubby*), text density and speed of dialogue, the dimness of the surtitles, or portions of the performance omitted from the surtitles (*Jean et Béatrice*), which resulted in reduced readability and lowered the relevance of the surtitles during certain moments of the productions. While the surtitles were generally cognitively effective and processed effortlessly by participants, it was observed that more cognitive input increases the extent to which the audience’s attention is split between the performance and the

surtitles. The strategy of condensed-direct translation (based on the concept of literal transfer) seemed to be generally well adapted for ensuring the positive reception of the audience, especially since the accuracy of the surtitles was not negatively perceived by Francophone participants and was generally not a distraction to audience members with knowledge of French. Despite this, the moments of increased action and rapid dialogue on stage increased the amount of reading time required, subsequently decreasing the readability and usability of the surtitles, while increasing the audience's cognitive load, as well as causing interference with their ability to focus their attention on stage. Further reduction to the surtitles may have been beneficial in such instances. During such moments, the audience's processing effort was increased, and this decreased the relevance of the translation. However, such occurrences seemed to have been infrequent, and the majority of participants, regardless of their French language proficiency, indicated that the surtitles facilitated their experience, while the majority of remaining participants who did not need to rely on the surtitles to understand the play noted that the surtitles had no influence on their experience. With regard to the audience reception of the surtitles, it can be ascertained that the surtitles were for the most part, effective and efficient, and thus the relevance of the translation was generally ensured. However, based on the results, it is evident that the surtitles required concentrated effort on behalf of viewers and that the effort is not always minimal.

We must consider that the participants were not consistent for all three productions. It is thus not possible to make concrete conclusions regarding the results. Having different participants for each production means that the participants' reading abilities and tendencies do not remain consistent for each survey. For an accurate comparative analysis of the surtitles, the participants would have needed to remain consistent for all three productions. The second factor to bear in mind is the participants' subjective recollections, coupled with the amount of time that elapsed between the time during which the participants saw the play and subsequently answered the survey. Some participants answered the survey the same evening or the day after the performance they attended, while other participants completed the survey up to six days following the performance. In a regulated study, the participants would remain the same for all three productions and the surveys would be completed by participants immediately after the performance seen. Another important factor to bear in mind with regards to the accuracy of these results is the ambiguity of the answer choices. "Sometimes", "a few times" and "often" are all parameters of frequency that can be subjective and interpreted differently. With such parameters,

it is impossible to ensure accuracy. It would be beneficial to conduct further studies on the audience reception of surtitles under more regulated conditions. Such studies would ensure that the participants remain consistent for all productions, and that they undergo reading aptitude and language proficiency tests to ensure more accurate results. The display times of the surtitles would be recorded electronically and software for quantitative data analysis could be used. If a survey is being issued to participants, it would be advisable to ensure that the survey answers be as objective as possible, using number ranges (rather than “always”, “sometimes / a few times” or “never”) to determine frequency of occurrences. If there were a way to conduct eye tracking studies on the manner in which audiences make use of the surtitles, this would contribute enormously to helping researchers optimize surtitles for ensuring the best reception possible. There is much to be gained by conducting further research on the audience reception of surtitles. Doing so will only help increase the accessible nature of this form of audiovisual translation. Collecting more data on average display times of surtitles and the audience’s reading behaviours can help further determine technical guidelines of surtitles and consequently improve the reception of surtitles.

5.2.) Linguistic and Cultural Aspects: The Reception of Surtitles in Canadian Francophone Minority Contexts

The final aspect of Gambier’s (2009) dimensions for research on AVT reception that is important to address for the quality assessment of the surtitles is the *repercussions* of the subtitled product and experience. Repercussions relate to effects of a translation at the cultural level (Chesterman, 2007), as well as the audience’s preferences and habits within the particular sociocultural context which affects the reception process (Gambier, 2009). To measure the repercussions of the surtitles, it is necessary to address socio-cultural variables and attitudinal issues. The sociocultural and linguistic aspects focused on within the framework of this study were limited to the participants first languages and their French language proficiency.

Overall, the largest portion of survey responses collected over the course of this study were from Group 1 participants, which were participants who were not recruited for the study. A total of 45% of these participants indicated that they are regular *L’UniThéâtre* patrons, while a total of 21% of overall participants (Group 1, Group 2, and Group 3 participants) indicated that

they are regular *L'UniThéâtre* patrons. Of the overall number of survey responses, 49% of participants claimed they are Francophone with self-rated French proficiency ratings of 7 to 10. Overall, just over half of responses (53%) were from participants whose first language is English, while 17% of participants indicated French as their first language, 12% indicating French and English as their first languages, and 18% indicated a language other than French or English as their first language. Among all participants, 93% of participants used the surtitles to some degree, while only 7% of participants indicated not having used the surtitles at all. The majority of those who used the surtitles were from the English L1 group, for a total of 59% of participants, those with an L1 other than French or/and English consisted of 18%, while 15% of participants were from the French L1 group and 8% were from the French and English L1 group. The majority of English L1 participants who used the surtitles rated their French language fluency from 1 to 6 (“beginner” – “intermediate”), for a total of 82% of these participants, while just over half of those with a L1 other than French or/and English rated the fluency from 7 to 10 (“advanced”), for a total of 54%. The French L1 participants who used the surtitles were all fluent in French (100%), with ratings from 7 to 10 (“advanced”), while 83% of the French and English L1 participants rated their fluency from 7 to 10 (“advanced”). Overall, 58% of participants who used the surtitles, self-rated their French language fluency anywhere between 1 to 6 and consisted primarily of participants from the English L1 and Other L1 groups, while the other 42% of participants who used the surtitles rated their French fluency from 7 to 10 and consisted mainly of participants from the French and English L1 and the French L1 groups.

One of the goals of this study was to determine the audience’s different perceptions, reactions to and attitudes toward the English surtitles at *L'Unithéâtre* according to the respective linguistic groups of audience members and to apply these results to Giesel’s audience model to demonstrate how it should be further nuanced for surtitling for audiences in minority Francophone contexts in Canada. The purpose of the study was to evaluate whether the chosen surtitling strategy of condensed-direct translation, based on the concept of literal transfer, was appropriate for such surtitling contexts. The basis for the main hypothesis of this study based on Ladouceur’s previous research (2013a; 2013c) which outlines that in surtitling contexts consisting of bilingual or multilingual spectators, it is important to reproduce the ST as close to its original form as possible since these audience members have simultaneous access to both the ST and the TT. It was assumed that incoherencies between the ST and the TT could have a negative impact on their

reception of the production since they could easily be distracted by what they would perceive as errors and thus be more prone to diverting their attention from the performance on stage. Even though bilingual Francophone audience members do not need the surtitles to understand a French performance, it was assumed that certain participants might feel tempted to compare the ST and TT. The translation strategy was based on the premise that the closer the English text adheres to the French dialogue spoken on stage, the less disconcertment there will be towards the surtitles on behalf of bilingual Francophone viewers who are likely to judge the accuracy and legitimacy of the English translation. Additionally, it was assumed that this would simultaneously minimize the distraction to Francophone audience members for whom the use of the surtitles is not a necessity. Preserving the characteristics of the syntactical and lexical structure of the original, within reasonable limits according to the space and time constraints of surtitling, was also hypothesized to be the best strategy to preserve the linguistic, cultural and artistic nature of the theatre performance. The results of this study were additionally meant to help confirm (or negate) the currently assumed manner in which the surtitles are used according to different groups of audience members in minority Francophone surtitling contexts (Ladouceur, *forthcoming*; Liss, 2012).

The results of this study are quite revealing with regard to the sociolinguistic aspect and serve to corroborate Ladouceur and Liss' existing assumptions with regard to the manners in which different linguistic groups make use of the surtitles in such contexts. It was revealed that for audience members who have no knowledge of French or limited French comprehension (English L1 and Other L1 groups, French fluency 1-6), the surtitles are used as their primary means of communication, but are also used to enhance their understanding or to confirm comprehension, especially when the speed of dialogue is rapid, and to understand unknown expressions and vocabulary. Most participants with French fluency ratings from 7 to 10, from all L1 groups (English, French, French and English, Other) used the surtitles either out of interest and/or to compare the translation (which was the main reason provided by participants with French fluency ratings of 10), for understanding the Quebecois accent or unknown Quebecois expressions, when missing a word or a line spoken by an actor due to rapid dialogue, when they were curious about the English equivalent of an expression, or even to learn the English equivalent of a word spoken on stage. Their comparison of the ST and the TT operated in a ST-TT direction, as well as in a TT-ST direction. While it was confirmed that there is a tendency on

behalf of audience members with higher levels of French proficiency to compare the auditory (ST) and visual (TT) messages, very few Francophone participants considered the surtitles to be a source of distraction.

In examining the results of this study, it can be determined that Griesel’s audience model should not only be re-evaluated, but re-structured to depict how the surtitles function for different linguistic groups. In the case of bilingual Francophone minority contexts, there is no need for the audience group that only has knowledge of the SL of the production, since all Francophone audience members are bilingual. In such contexts, the audience is thus divided into two, rather than three, categories, which consist of 1.) audience members who have no knowledge or limited knowledge of the SL (English L1 and Other L1 participants) and 2.) audience members who have knowledge of both the SL (French) and the TL (English) with varying levels of French proficiency. This second group can be further divided into two categories, namely those with “intermediate” French proficiency and those with “advanced” French proficiency.

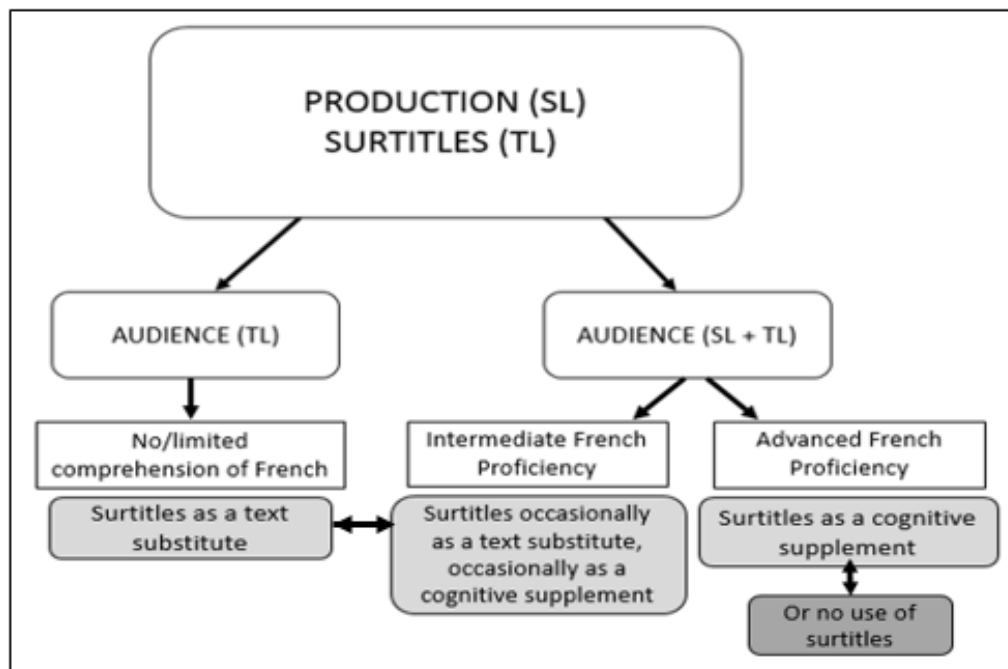


Figure 44: Griesel’s Audience Model Restructured for Francophone Minority Surtitling Contexts Including Gottlieb’s Perception Modes

Gottlieb’s perception modes (2012) were used to qualify how the surtitles function for the different linguistic groups of audience members in this particular Francophone minority context. Applied to the audience model for surtitling in Francophone minority contexts developed above,

the perception modes are applied as follows. For participants with self-rated French fluency ratings between 1 and 4 (“beginner” or deaf), which consisted of members from the English L1 and Other L1 groups only, the surtitles acted as a text substitute, aided by bilingually mediated communication and occasionally, although rarely, as a cognitive supplement. For those with French fluency ratings between 5 and 7 (“intermediate”) the surtitles acted occasionally as a text substitute, but mainly as a cognitive supplement, functioning as a linguistic support for facilitating their understanding of the ST. For participants with French fluency ratings from 8 to 10, the surtitles either functioned as a cognitive supplement and were generally used to check the accuracy of the translation, or they were not used at all, because these audience members did not need to use the surtitles to understand the performance.

Compared to the explanations of strategies provided by participants, those with higher levels of French fluency would process the ST (the dialogue and the performance) before referring to the surtitles and had an easier time switching back and forth between the surtitles and the performance, whereas those with lower levels of proficiency tended to first process the TT (the surtitles) to ensure comprehension of the ST, because they had difficulties processing the ST first. This meant that audience members with lower levels of French proficiency had to quickly read the surtitles, before directing their attention to the action on stage.

Overall, the surtitles facilitated the experience for participants with lower French proficiency as well as those with higher French proficiency and even for participants whose first language is French (or both French and English) and for some participants who indicated not having used the surtitles. It is quite interesting that the majority of Francophones who participated in this study did make use of the surtitles to a certain extent. It is revealing that overall, the surtitles did not negatively influence the experience for those with higher French fluency who either used or did not use the surtitles. This indicates that the translation strategy was suitable, as the minimal discrepancies between the ST and the TT generally did not distract the audience with knowledge of the SL spoken on stage. Additionally, although a very small number of Francophone participants expressed their dismay at the surtitles, the attitudes and reactions of the Francophone audience members, and non-Francophones alike, were resoundingly positive.

5.3.) The Potentials of Subtitles for Second-Language Learning

It was also hypothesized that as opposed to condensation, which entails reducing the ST to produce a shorter, more economic translation, the strategy of condensed-direct translation was a more suitable strategy to aid French-language learners understand and acquire the SL spoken on stage. The majority of participants who used the subtitles indicated that the subtitles were helpful for language learning with just over 70% of participants from both the English L1 group and the Other L1 group and over 50% of French and English L1 participants finding them helpful. Just over 25% of the French L1 group who are fluent in French found the subtitles helpful for learning French, but from the perspective of a language learner and not from a personal perspective. The most common comment provided was that the subtitles helped with listening comprehension and were helpful for learning new French vocabulary or (Quebecois) expressions because the subtitles help with pairing the French words spoken on stage with their English equivalents. However, the subtitles were also beneficial to language learners as a means of testing their French language comprehension, and helped clarify complex phrases and syntax and to understand humour, emotional intonations, as well as pronunciation. The participants also found that the subtitles were beneficial for gaining an insight into the culture and attributed the authentic nature of the dialogue as being a positive aspect towards helping with learning French. The participants who did not find the subtitles beneficial for learning French were either already fluent, or were not actively learning the language and thus had no motivation to use the subtitles in this manner.

A total of 66% of all participants who used and did not use the subtitles claimed that it would be beneficial if there were French subtitles, rather than English subtitles. The most frequent comment provided by these participants was that the French subtitles would help with providing a visual reference and that this would be beneficial for learning vocabulary, pronunciation and/or grammatical structures. Several participants explained that the actor's accents and rapid speech were factors that interfered with their ability to understand the French dialogue, so having the visual reference in French would benefit them.

Displaying French subtitles may not be ideal for performances intended for a general audience, however it could be beneficial to offer French subtitles during performances for school groups, since the purpose of attending a French performance is to be immersed in the language

and many school groups that attend performances at *L'UniThéâtre* already have at least basic knowledge of French. The use of French surtitles would mean that at least the Francophone students who are fluent in French and do not need to use surtitles to understand the performance would not have to be exposed to English. French surtitles would help to mediate this issue and provide French as a second language and French Immersion students with cognitive support through the surtitles to help them understand the performance. Using French surtitles would be interesting in such cases as this would accentuate the mission of the theatre as a promoter of French culture and language.

These results highlight that surtitles have several language learning potentials and that there are many topics to be explored with regard to surtitles and language learning. Studies could be focused on particular aspects of language learning such as vocabulary acquisition or listening comprehension. Research could be conducted on the cognitive mapping theory to test whether or not language learners form cognitive associations between the ST and TT which are beneficial for retention of new vocabulary and expressions. Such topics should be exploited so that researchers can gain a better understanding of how to create surtitles that are the most cognitively efficient and beneficial for language learning.

5.4. Closing Remarks

This study has underscored that surtitles have a positive and important impact in Francophone minority theatre contexts in Western Canada and Ontario. While surtitles were initially adopted to accommodate exogamous couples (French/English) – a common phenomenon in Canadian minority Francophone contexts – surtitles have become a tool that enables these theatre companies to promote the French language and culture and have made Francophone productions in the Francophone minority theatre contexts of Western Canada and Ontario accessible to a broader audience, increasing the audience attendance rates of Francophone minority theatre companies and resulting in a slight increase in revenue. The surtitles have provided these theatre companies with more exposure in the theatrical landscape and subsequently, greater possibilities for recognition, allowing them to be placed on equal grounds with Anglophone theatre companies. The Artistic Directors of *Théâtre la seizième*, *L'UniThéâtre*, *Le Cercle Molière*, *La Troupe du jour* and *Théâtre français de Toronto* emphasized that they

would not consider stopping the practice because the surtitles have become part of their programming and bring too many advantages.

According to the results of this study, from an audience perspective, there may be some Francophones who are in complete opposition to the English surtitles for language-political reasons, however most Francophone audience members seem to understand that the surtitles serve a valuable cause. As opposed to merely viewing the surtitles as tolerable, the Francophone participants in this study expressed an overwhelming amount of support for the surtitles. The predominant comment made by French L1 and French and English L1 participants is that they appreciate the surtitles as they enable their Anglophone friends to attend and enjoy a play in French. Some Francophone participants explained that they enjoyed the presence of surtitles because they added to their overall comprehension of the performance and helped them gain further insight into the nuances of the play. The English L1 and Other L1 participants expressed their enjoyment in attending a subtitled performance and their appreciation for the surtitles as a tool for making Francophone theatre more accessible and inclusive to the greater community. It can be assumed that Francophones who disapprove of the use of English surtitles and the presence of English in this Francophone theatre environment represent but a small portion of the Francophone community who regularly attends performances at *L'UniThéâtre*. Had the surtitles been a contentious issue for many Francophone audience members, one would assume that they would have participated in this study to voice their opinions and points of view.

Surtitles evidently have an important and positive impact in the Francophone minority theatre contexts of Western and Canada and Ontario. Surtitles help increase cross-cultural understanding and encourage multicultural interaction, thus promoting core Canadian values. They not only promote bilingualism and the social integration of two communities (French and English) that have been at odds over the course of Canadian history, but also contribute to intercultural and interlingual understanding and appreciation.

This study also benefits Canadian and international theatres that currently use surtitles, or plan on doing so. Surtitles are a tool that should be exploited in multilingual contexts. Further research on the audience reception of surtitles in general, as well in specific contexts, should be conducted in order to develop new strategies and possibly, new technologies, which can be best suited for the reception of surtitles.

The results of this study provide a framework upon which to structure surtitles for use within a multicultural and bilingual context such as Canada, as well as for theatre productions destined to a globalized market. Furthermore, this study contributes to the discipline of surtitling and AVT insofar as no such study has yet been carried out in such depth, and the results apply globally, contributing to the research that has already been accomplished internationally on this emerging academic field.

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APPENDIX

Self-Declared Francophone Status and French Fluency Ratings Per Participant L1						
	Self-Declared Francophone Status	Participant L1 (Self-Declared First Language)	Total # of Participants (and % of total self-declared Francophone status)	French Fluency 1-4 ("Not fluent")	French Fluency 5-6	French Fluency 7-10 ("Fluent")
LA CORNEILLE	Yes	French L1	16 (44%)	--	--	16
		English L1	8 (22%)	--	--	8
		French & English L1	7 (19%)	--	--	7
		Other L1	5 (15%)	--	--	5
	Total:	36 (57% of total participants)		0	0	36 (100%)
	No	French L1	0 (0%)	--	--	--
		English L1	23 (85%)	17	6	--
		French & English L1	0 (0%)	--	--	--
		Other L1	4 (15%)	--	4	--
	Total:	27 (43% of total participants)		17 (63%)	10 (37%)	0
TUBBY ET NOTTUBBY	Yes	French L1	3 (14%)	--	--	3
		English L1	8 (36%)	--	--	8
		French & English L1	8 (36%)	--	--	8
		Other L1	3 (14%)	--	--	3
	Total:	22 (38% of total participants)		--	--	22 (100%)
	No	French L1	0	--	--	--
		English L1	30	23	7	--
		French & English L1	1	--	1	--
		Other L1	5	1	4	--
	Total:	36 (62% of total participants)		24 (67%)	12 (33%)	0
JEAN ET BÉATRICE	Yes	French L1	7 (23%)	--	--	7
		English L1	9 (29%)	--	--	9
		French & English L1	6 (19%)	--	--	6
		Other L1	9 (29%)	--	--	9
	Total:	31 (53% of total participants)		0	0	31 (100%)
	No	French L1	0	--	--	--
		English L1	23	19	4	--
		French & English L1	1	--	1	--
		Other L1	3	2	1	--
	Total:	27 (47% of total participants)		21 (78%)	6 (22%)	0

Table 36: Self-Declared Francophone Status and French Fluency Ratings Per Participant L1

La Corneille by Lise Vaillancourt (Source Text)	Surtitled Target Text
Ça a commencé comme ça;	<i>- It began like this.</i>
en revenant de mon cours de yoga, une corneille volait dans mon loft.	<i>When I returned from my yoga class, a crow was flying in my loft.</i>
Moi qui suis superstitieuse, j'ai tout de suite pensé à un message de mort.	<i>Being superstitious, I immediately thought it was a sign of death.</i>
Les lumières étaient-elles en train de s'éteindre définitivement sur l'Amérique ?	<i>Were the lights really starting to fade for good over America?</i>
Y avais-tu une de mes amies qui venait d'apprendre qu'elle avait un cancer ?	<i>Did one of my friends just find out she had cancer?</i>
Où c'était de ma propre mort dont il s'agissait?	<i>Or was this a sign of my own death?</i>
J'ai toujours été poursuivie par l'angoisse de la mort; une mort qui arriverait d'un seul coup, sans crier gare.	<i>I've always been afraid of death. Of a death that comes without warning.</i>
Je mourrais au milieu d'une phrase comme un insecte qui s'écrase sur la lunette d'une voiture.	<i>Of dying mid-sentence, like an insect that gets squashed onto a windshield.</i>
Pendant que je courais pour ouvrir toutes les fenêtres,	<i>While I was running to open all of the windows...</i>
je me suis emparée d'une sacoche-étui qui traînait sur la table de cuisine	<i>...I grabbed a purse that was lying on the kitchen table...</i>
et je l'ai lancé vers l'oiseau qui s'était installé sur un tuyau.	<i>...and threw it at the bird that had perched itself on a pipe.</i>
Par où t'es rentrée, toi?	<i>How'd you get in here?</i>
Allez, va t'en!	<i>Go away!</i>
Sors d'ici!	<i>Get out of here!</i>
J'ai lancé la petite sacoche plusieurs fois avant que la corneille finisse par sortir.	<i>I threw the purse several times before the crow finally left.</i>
Puis je me suis empressée de fermer toutes les fenêtres.	<i>Then I rushed to close all the windows.</i>
Quand j'ai récupéré la sacoche,	<i>When I picked up the purse...</i>
le petit miroir, à l'intérieur était brisé.	<i>...the little mirror inside was broken.</i>
Ah, non! Un miroir brisé, ça représente au moins sept ans de malheur, peut-être plus.	<i>Oh no! A broken mirror means at least seven years of bad luck! Maybe more.</i>
Y a quelque chose de terrible qui se prépare c'est sûr.	<i>Something terrible's brewing, that's for sure.</i>
Une chance, dans la journée, je m'étais achetée plein de tisanes pour combattre le stress et des anti-oxydants pour combattre l'effet du stress.	<i>Luckily, I had bought myself tons of stress-relieving teas and antioxidants earlier in the day.</i>
J'ai jeté la p'tite sacoche-étui dans la poubelle	<i>I threw the purse in the garbage...</i>

Table 37: La Corneille – Excerpt of Source Text and Corresponding Surtitles

<i>Le Destin tragi-comique de Tubby et Nottubby (Source Text)</i>	Surtitled Target Text
I want to die I want to die I want to die	<i>(no surtitles)</i>
Laissez- moi mourir	♪ <i>Let me die</i> ♪
J'ai plus de boulot I've got no job J'ai pas d'amis I've got no friends Rien à manger I've got no food	<i>(no surtitles)</i>
Je suis désespéré	♪ <i>I'm so desperate</i> ♪
C'est trop injuste J'ai besoin d'être aimé	♪ <i>It's too unfair</i> <i>I need to be loved</i> ♪
Mais tout le monde s'en fout Je suis au fond du trou	♪ <i>But no one cares</i> <i>I've hit rock bottom</i> ♪
I want to die I want to die I want to die This is the end	<i>(no surtitles)</i>
T: Goodbye NT: Goodbye T: (<i>Voyant NT</i>) Oh! Hello! NT: (<i>Voyant T, répondant</i>) Hello! T/NT : Ahhhh !!! T: Who the hell are you? NT : Who the hell are you ?	<i>(no surtitles)</i>
T: Vous êtes vivant ! NT: Bien sûr que je suis vivant! Vous aussi vous êtes vivant ! T: Mais bien sûr que je suis vivant!	- You're alive! - Of course I'm alive. You are too! - But of course I am.
T: Tubby! NT: Nottubby! T: Lovely to meet you!	<i>(no surtitles)</i>
NT: Tout le plaisir est pour moi!	- The pleasure is mine!
T: So how do you do? NT: Good. Good. Very good. How do you do? T: Good. Good. Very good. Very good. NT: Good Good T: Good, good NT: Very good	<i>(no surtitles)</i>
T: Quelle belle soirée, n'est-ce pas? NT: Oui, magnifique!!	- Beautiful night, isn't it? - Yes, magnificent!
T: La magie de Noël!	- The magic of Christmas!

Table 38: Tubby et Nottubby – Excerpt of Source Text and Corresponding Surtitles

<i>Jean et Béatrice</i> (Source Text)	Surtitled Target Text
BÉATRICE : Oui?	- Yes?
Qui est là?	Who's there?
Oui, je sais, l'ascenseur était en panne,	Yes, I know. The elevator was out of order.
vous avez monté les trente-trois étages à pied et vous avez vu absolument personne dans l'escalier.	You walked 33 floors and saw no one in the stairwell.
Vous vous êtes même demande si l'immeuble était abandonné, et si tout ça était une farce finalement, ou peut-être un guet-apens.	You wondered if the building was abandoned, or if this was a joke, or maybe a trap.
Vers le dix-huitième étage, vous avez ressenti un vague découragement et vous avez considéré, pendant quelques minutes, la possibilité de rebrousser chemin.	At the 18 th floor, you felt a bit discouraged and considered turning back.
Mais vous vous êtes tout de suite repris.	But you quickly changed your mind.
Vous avez enfilé les quinze derniers étages au pas de course, comme le véritable athlète que vous êtes.	You ran up the last 15 flights, like the true athlete you are.
Ce qui VOUS a fatigue, c'est pas tellement le sprint, mais la chaleur, qui était insupportable dans l'escalier	What tired you out wasn't really the sprint, but the unbearable heat in the stairwell.
D'ailleurs, vous êtes complètement déshydraté, et, à propos, est-ce que j'aurais pas un peu d'eau ?	You're completely dehydrated, and would I happen to have some water?
Mais excusez-moi. Je parle trop.	Sorry. I'm talking too much.
JEAN : Combien ? BÉATRICE : Pardon ?	- How much? - Pardon?
JEAN : Substantielle, ça veut dire combien ? BÉATRICE : Qu'est-ce que vous voulez dire ?	- Substantial. How much is that? - What do you mean?
JEAN : C'est bien votre affiche ? BÉATRICE : Oui, c'est mon affiche.	- It's your ad? - Yes, it is.
JEAN : Et ici, regardez ce qui est écrit. Récompense substantielle	- Look. It says here: <i>Substantial Reward.</i>
BÉATRICE : Oui, c'est écrit. JEAN : Combien?	- Yes, it does. - How much?
BÉATRICE : Pas tout de suite. JEAN : Pardon ?	- Not now. - Pardon?
BÉATRICE : On parle pas de ça tout de suite. JEAN : Pourquoi ?	- We won't talk about that yet. - Why not?
BÉATRICE : Souriez !	- Smile!

Table 39: *Jean et Béatrice* – Excerpt of Source Text and Corresponding Surtitles