



# From *Sendung mit der Maus* to *Mouse TV* Experiences from a linguistic film dubbing project



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## The film: *Viererkniffel/The mystery of Zoe's dice*

- What is the secret of Zoe's dice? Whenever Zoe throws her dice under water, she only gets fours. Christoph from the *Sendung mit der Maus* tries to solve the mystery.
- This seven-minute educational film provides an entertaining introduction to the scientific method. The protagonists formulate and test several hypotheses. They use their results to build a model, then make a prediction and achieve the expected outcome.
- Source: WDR, *Sendung mit der Maus*, (<https://www.wdrmaus.de/filme/sachgeschichten/viererkniffel.php5>)



## Linguistic and methodological teaching objectives

- introduce and discuss the **scientific method**
- raise awareness of **register-specific language use**
- raise awareness of the characteristics of **spoken language**
- discuss **translational equivalence** (e.g. regarding content, associations and style)
- introduce the principles and problems of **film dubbing**

## Underlying pedagogical concept(s)

- **product-oriented teaching**: produce a dubbed film
- **research-oriented teaching**: students carry out small-scale research projects and present them in class, followed by a reflection on their research's contribution to the dubbing process
- **competence-oriented teaching**: foster the acquisition of new digital technical skills (using the software Final Cut Pro)
- **active learning**: students play an active role in the planning and problem-solving process (e.g. speaker casting; slowing down speed)
- **individualized learning**: task allocation based on heterogeneous participants' skills and interests (e.g. regarding the level of German and prior experience with translation or film dubbing)

## Students' independent research projects and presentations

- **common problems in dubbing**
- **compare language use in**
  - educational TV programmes for children (*Sesame Street/Dora the explorer*) vs. educational TV programmes for adults (*MythBusters/BBC documentaries*)
  - educational TV programmes for children (e.g. *Sendung mit der Maus*) vs. educational books for children (e.g. the *Was-ist-Was* series)
  - different English/German educational TV programmes for children (*Sendung mit der Maus/Mouse TV* vs. *Sesamstraße/Sesame Street*)
- collect **catchphrases** from *Sendung mit der Maus* and *Mouse TV*
- collect German and English **expressions** that can be used to provide **explanations**

## Seminar outline/Steps in the dubbing process

- kick-off meeting:
  - watch film together
  - discuss the **scientific method**
  - find and **distribute research project topics**
- **collect tasks** that are necessary for the dubbing process
- inputs on the **basics of dubbing and register research**
- **presentations** by students on their research projects
- **transcription of German audio** following transcription guidelines
  - short connected passages with time codes and scene descriptions
  - indicate pauses <...> and the way of speaking (e.g. <smiling/surprised>)
  - ca. 1 minute per student; copy-paste into a single table
- **translation** into English by the same students
- discuss students' rough translation in class and **improve** it together regarding **idiomaticity**, grammar and appropriateness for the register
- make translation **shorter** where necessary
- have translation **checked** by English native speakers
- **cast a speaker**
  - candidates record a **one-minute audio** of the translated English text on their mobiles and upload the file to Moodle
  - listen to audios in class and **vote** for favourite speaker
- carry out **Dubbing Day** (see below)
- wrap-up meeting with **celebration**; watch **dubbed film** and documentation

## Technical equipment

- International tape with music and sounds but without German voiceover (obtained from the WDR's *Mitschnittservice*)
- Video editing software: Final Cut Pro
- High-quality microphone



## End-of-term assignment: Project report

- students **answer** the following **questions** in 4500-7000 characters:
  - What were the **aims** of the class?
  - What did we do (e.g. which **methods** did we use)?
  - What did you do specifically (e.g. to **contribute** to the aim)?
  - What **results** did we achieve?
  - What did you **learn**?

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Watch the dubbed English version of *Viererkniffel* at  
[https://www.wdrmaus.de/extras/maus\\_international/englisch.php5](https://www.wdrmaus.de/extras/maus_international/englisch.php5)



## Dubbing Day (in LMU's eLab)

