

# Audiovisual Translation

## Language Transfer on Screen

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## Introduction

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### **The Wealth and Scope of Audiovisual Translation**

In the twenty-first century, the media is omnipresent: to inform, arguably sometimes to misinform, to sell, to entertain and to educate. A quick perusal of traditional television programmes or cinema guides will testify to the growth and importance of the media and the need for audiovisual translation (AVT) in most countries. The reasons are manifold: a larger number of television channels at all levels, international, national, regional and local, means a sharp increase in the quantity and range of programmes required to meet the needs of broadcasting schedules. With the steady decline of analogue technology, the arrival of the digital era has also contributed to the diversification of offerings provided by television. In a very short time, corporations such as the BBC and ITV in the UK have more than doubled their number of channels and similar developments have also seen a record boom in new television channels at European level with 277 new channels launched in Europe since 2004 and in excess of 200 in 2005 (Hamilton and Stevenson, 2005). As for the cinema, the film industry seems to have emerged from the lean years when the video appeared to pose a serious threat to its continued existence, and now the number of cinema-goers again seems healthy. The flourishing celebration of film festivals, with hundreds of them taking place in any given year in all corners of the globe also testifies to this positive outlook. Add to this the advent of the DVD and the fact that the Internet is firmly established in our society and the picture is virtually complete.

There is also the theatre, the opera and other live events where translation may be required in the form of surtitles; and the rapid developments we are witnessing in the field of accessibility to the media for

people with sensory impairments. Traditionally ignored in academic exchanges, subtitling for the deaf and hard-of-hearing (SDH) and audio description for the blind and the partially sighted (AD) are becoming part of our daily audiovisual landscape and attracting the interest of many scholars and practitioners.

Given the many ways in which viewers can access audiovisual material – DVD, television, cinema, Internet – it is difficult to quantify with precision the percentage of foreign-language programmes translated and screened in any given country. Statistics available tend to be concerned with the number of films exported and imported for cinema release only, forgetting crucially any other films or audiovisual programmes (sitcoms, documentaries, TV series, musical concerts, cartoons, etc.) that are broadcast by private and public television channels and distributed on DVD and the Internet. Taken in isolation, the sparse figures available are likely to give a somewhat skewed overview of the real situation. At the expense of European productions, and according to Yvane (1995), an extremely high percentage of audiovisual programmes originate in the USA; 90% in Denmark, 90% in France, 90% in Germany, 94% in Greece, 75% in Ireland, 80% in Italy, 92% in Luxembourg, 90% in the Netherlands, 70% in Portugal, 95% in Spain, and 88% in the United Kingdom. Now a decade old, these figures are likely today to be the same or slightly higher as much has happened since the mid-1990s, notably the exponential growth of television stations at international, national, regional and local levels.

There has been, however, a trend in the opposite direction. New low production cost audiovisual genres have emerged that, emulating the format of similar programmes designed in other countries and for other audiences, can be produced in the language of other communities without the need for translation. Examples abound and British reality television programmes such as *Big Brother*; quizzes in the vein of *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire* and *The Weakest Link*, soap operas depicting the daily routines of next-door neighbours, talk shows and contests for ‘wannabes’ have proved popular in most European countries and beyond. In most cases, the only translation required is that of the name of the programme. However, these developments do not necessarily mean that the overall need for translation is lower since, as already mentioned previously, there are many more television channels broadcasting many more hours. All these changes are mainly concerned with television productions only and more studies in the transnational trading of audiovisual programmes at all levels are needed in order for an overall picture to emerge of the real expansion of the field.

Nevertheless, despite the fact that the number of programmes produced in national languages would seem to be on the increase, the situation in countries where English is not the official language is such that a large volume of audiovisual programmes still needs to be translated. While traditionally feature films, television series, cartoons, sitcoms, soap operas and documentaries have been ideal candidates for this intercultural journey, the current growth in the need to provide and supply more audiovisual material for new channels has made broadcasters re-examine and broaden the range of programmes suitable for interlingual transfer. Subjects ranging from cookery, travel, DIY, fashion, interviews, gardening and awards ceremonies to political speeches, have started to find their way, via translation, to television sets in the living rooms of other countries. To a large extent, these developments help to account for the so-called revolution experienced in the field of audiovisual translation during the last couple of decades (Díaz Cintas, 2003).

The move from analogue to digital technology and the potential afforded by the digitisation of images has also opened up new avenues, radically changing the essence of the industry. Together with the ubiquitous presence of the computer and the Internet, the arrival of the DVD can be hailed as one of the most exciting and revolutionary developments in recent decades. In just a few years, the DVD has become the favoured mode for distribution and consumption of audiovisual programmes. Its increased memory capacity, when compared to the CD; its superior image definition compared to the traditional VHS tape; and its greater flexibility, allowing the viewer to watch the programme on the TV set, the computer screen or a portable DVD player, constitute some of the main features that make it a favourite with producers as well as distributors and viewers. This has, in turn, resulted in new working practices, had an impact on the design of dedicated software programs, facilitated the work of scholars researching the field, and altered the consumer's view of audiovisual products. The rate at which some of these changes in working practice are taking place is perhaps most striking in the field of subtitling. In a relatively short period of time, the process of subtitling has gone through a substantial transformation; what a decade ago was common practice is now viewed as out of date. Changes are happening at all levels – technological, working routines, audience reception, emergence of new translation modes and approaches – all bringing in their wake advantages and disadvantages that are fully discussed in this volume.

Also increasing in volume is the amount of translation required in the field of AVT. Films that in 'dubbing countries' have traditionally

been dubbed for both cinema and VHS releases as well as television broadcasting are now also being subtitled for distribution on DVD; and classic movies that were only dubbed when first released are nowadays also available in subtitled versions on DVD. In addition, the increased memory capacity of the DVD has made it possible to include more material also in need of translation: known in the industry as 'VAM', value added material, producer's edits, false takes, interviews and other related bonus material often takes up more time and space than the actual film itself. TV series, sitcoms and cartoons that are normally dubbed when broadcast on television also end up on DVDs with subtitles. The music industry, too, seems to be slowly moving away from the CD to the DVD in order to promote their live concerts or video clips that tend to be subtitled. In addition, individual films and other audiovisual programmes are now released in different formats such as cinema, television, DVD, CD-ROM and Internet, which combined with the increasing number of media companies operating in the field, has resulted in many films and programmes being translated more than once to meet consumer demand.

Since the early days of the cinema, in order to make these audiovisual programmes comprehensible to audiences unfamiliar with the language of the original, different forms of language transfer on the screen have been required. In the main, there are two basic approaches to the translation of the spoken language of the original programme: to retain it as spoken or to change it into written text. In the first instance the original dialogue is replaced by a new soundtrack in the target language in a process generally known as revoicing. The replacement may be total, whereby we do not hear the original, as in lip sync dubbing and narration, or partial, when the original soundtrack can still be heard in the background, as in voice-over and interpreting. All these modes are available to the profession and some of them are more suited to particular audiovisual genres than others. Lip sync dubbing, for instance, is mainly used in the translation of films and TV series and sitcoms, whereas narration and voice-over tend to be more used in the case of documentaries, interviews and programmes on current affairs.

When the decision has been taken to keep the original soundtrack and to switch from the spoken to the written mode, by adding text to the screen, the technique is known as subtitling. Quicker and a lot cheaper than dubbing, it has more recently become the favoured translation mode in the media world and comes hand in hand with globalisation. Despite the historically strong polarisation between advocates and detractors of the two different approaches, nowadays it is

generally accepted that different translation approaches make their own individual demands while remaining equally acceptable. The choice of one method in preference to another will simply depend on factors such as habit and custom, financial constraints, programme genre, distribution format and audience profile – to mention just a few. In this volume the full range of approaches is discussed as applied to a number of different languages.

For several years full access to audiovisual media for minority social groups such as the deaf and the blind has been an issue. Recent developments and studies show that the needs of these groups are increasingly being catered for and this field of expertise now holds an established position within audiovisual translation. Accessibility is a new key concept; an umbrella term that encompasses all associated new modes of translation.

According to statistics (Neves, 2005: 79), between 1% and 5% of the population of any country, are deaf or hearing-impaired. The number of people in these categories is growing as more people are living into old age and they account for significant numbers on the continents of Europe and North America. According to Hay (1994: 55), around 30% of all Americans over 65 years of age have some degree of hearing loss. As for Europe, figures presented at the 2003 international conference *Accessibility for All* projected that by 2015 there will be over 90 million adults affected by a hearing loss (Neves, 2005: 79).

These figures clearly call for a more consistent and systematic approach to making it possible for viewers with sensory impairment to gain access to television and other media. Since the mid 1970s, subtitling for the deaf and hard-of-hearing (SDH), also known as (closed) captioning in American English, has formed part of the audiovisual landscape in order to ensure greater democratic access to audiovisual programming. On television, these subtitles are broadcast by means of an independent signal, activated only by those interested, by accessing pages 888 or 777 of teletext in most European countries. In North America they are transmitted on what is known as line 21. The oral content of the actors' dialogue is converted into written speech, which is presented in subtitles of up to three, or occasionally four, lines. They generally change colour on television depending on the person who is talking or the emphasis given to certain words within the same subtitle. Besides the dialogue, they also incorporate all paralinguistic information that contributes to the development of the plot or to the creation of atmosphere, which a deaf person cannot access from the soundtrack, e.g. a telephone ringing, laughter, applause, a knock on the door, and the like.

Visual impairment is one of the most age-related of disabilities and the vast majority of blind and partially sighted people are elderly. According to the European Blind Union (EBU, online) 7.4 million of Europeans – close to 2% of the total population – have a significant visual disability. As demographic trends show that the number of elderly people is on the increase, one can only expect that the percentage of people with visual impairment will also increase in the near future. In the field of accessibility, a more recent development has been audio description for the blind and the partially sighted (AD), a service which is rapidly gaining momentum and visibility. It can be defined as an additional narration that fits in the silences between dialogue and describes action, body language, facial expressions and anything that will help people with visual impairment follow what is happening on screen or on stage. Audio describing television programmes, films, plays, sporting events and even an exhibition of paintings is now technically relatively easy, especially with digital technology (Marriott and Vale, 2002).

In the field of audio description, as well as in SDH, English-speaking countries such as the UK, the USA, Canada and Australia seem to be leading the rest of the world. However, coinciding with the European Year of People with Disabilities in 2003 ([www.eypd2003.org](http://www.eypd2003.org)) various actions were taken by the EU at international level and by individual European countries at national level, to raise awareness and to foster changes aimed at improving the lives of people with disabilities. Taking advantage of the situation, a number of countries in the European Union took the opportunity to launch initiatives leading to widening accessibility to the audiovisual media for all their citizens. In addition to increased general awareness, efforts already undertaken have also resulted in actions such as the passing of legislation making it compulsory to broadcast a minimum number of hours with SDH and AD,<sup>1</sup> and the creation of national bodies responsible for monitoring developments in the field.<sup>2</sup> A welcome step forward towards further increase in accessibility is the arrival of digital television, a development that is bound to change prevailing notions and attitudes.

Although television is likely to remain a favoured medium for subtitling for the deaf and hard-of-hearing and for audio description for the blind and partially sighted, the future of these two services goes beyond the scope of television. SDH and AD are already gaining major importance in the DVD market and are also in regular use in the cinema. Intralingual subtitling is being complemented by interlingual subtitling for the deaf and hard-of-hearing and new modes of translation are emerging, such as

audio subtitling, in order to make subtitled programmes accessible to the blind in countries where a large percentage of the programmes are commercialised in a foreign language with subtitles.

This flourish of activities in the field of AVT at industrial level has had a positive knock-on effect in the university world where AVT is now emerging as a thriving academic discipline for teaching and research. For many years, the skills of the trade were acquired in the workplace, away from educational establishments. Despite the importance of the role of AVT in our daily lives, on the whole universities have been slow in curriculum design and the development of new courses. This situation is, however, rapidly changing and there are now many different specialist courses in AVT on offer at universities worldwide.

Audiovisual translation also has an important role to play in the classroom. Material and exercises may be drawn from the area of AVT and used in the process of second language acquisition. Subtitling can be a powerful training and teaching tool in the foreign language learning class. Hearing the original language while reading the dialogue in context provides a stimulating environment for students to consolidate what they are learning, enrich their vocabulary at the same time as they become familiar with and absorb the culture of a foreign language in an authentic setting. However, subtitles are also a potent force in language acquisition outside the classroom. In Singapore it is a significant factor in the life of young Singaporeans who have been brought up speaking English but in the presence of older generations find themselves watching programmes in Mandarin. Subtitled in English, Chinese drama on television is of great help in facilitating the understanding of the Mandarin they hear; the importance of the subtitles to the language acquisition process is considerable. And in some parts of Europe subtitled programmes serve as the most important means of acquiring mastery of English. As reported in Gottlieb (2004: 96), when asked why they wanted to learn how to read, 72 out of 75 first-grade Danish students declared that they wanted to be able to read the subtitles on television; the ability to read books no longer appeared to be a major incentive. For the citizens of a nation who reportedly listen to English on television and video for an average of one hour per day, this would hardly come as a surprise (Gottlieb, 1994: 153–7 and Gottlieb, 1997: 151–3). Reading subtitles in the foreign language while watching a foreign language programme also appears to be beneficial to vocabulary acquisition, as shown by Belgian studies (Van de Poel and d'Ydewalle, 2001). Further advantageous uses of subtitles include the learning of minority



languages through subtitled film sequences (Baldry, 2001 reported in Gottlieb, 2004: 88).

More recently, audiovisual translation has evolved to the point where, as a discipline, it is now one of the most vibrant and vigorous fields within Translation Studies. With the celebration of several international specialised conferences and the publication of edited volumes and monographs on topics in AVT, research in the field has also gained visibility in a comparatively short period of time.

Although at present, audiovisual translation is experiencing an unprecedented boom of interest and activity at all levels, a number of problematic issues remain to be addressed. The changes taking place in the profession are fast, not always allowing sufficient time for full adjustment. Old methods tend to compete with new techniques, and consistency is not always maintained. Subtitle styles tend to vary from country to country, even from company to company. In recent years, calls for a 'Code of Best Practice in Audiovisual Translation' have been recurrent, but would such a document be workable? Is it necessary or even feasible for all aspects to be harmonised? If so, should it be done at local, national or international level?

In the audiovisual field, the global dominance of the English language in many spheres becomes even more of an issue. Production and distribution companies, run in most cases with the help of American capital, have US interests at their heart. Hollywood, the powerhouse of the western film industry, mirrors and exports cultural patterns that have an immediate impact on other languages and cultures. New developments in the industry mean that in addition to Los Angeles, London is also becoming a world nerve centre for AVT. Given this situation, can we really talk of an 'exchange' of cultural products? Can the term 'inter-cultural' be used to describe this process? Or are we simply faced with a one-dimensional flow of information and ideas from the metropolis to the 'territories', as countries are known in the profession's jargon?

## Structure of the volume

*Audiovisual Translation: Language Transfer on Screen* attempts to provide answers to some of these questions. Others, however, will remain open to debate but in an expanding field rapidly generating increasing interest at professional, educational and research levels.

The seventeen contributions to the subject contained in this volume offer a detailed overview of most of the translation modes used in the audiovisual media. Part I of the book deals with **Subtitling and**

**Surtitling**, two techniques that respect the original soundtrack and add the translation in the form of short written texts. In *Subtitling for the DVD Industry*, Panayota Georgakopoulou takes a close look at the recent growth in the DVD market and the rise of subtitling as a rapidly expanding international industry. Georgakopoulou discusses some of the constraints (and possibilities) inherent in subtitling in general, then proceeds to examine how these are dealt with in the DVD subtitling industry. The focus is on subtitling from English into other languages, and all examples used come from the database of the European Captioning Institute (ECI), which is a UK subtitling company and one of the world leaders in multilingual DVD subtitling. Georgakopoulou's contribution concludes by analysing the impact that centralisation is having on the profession and discussing the potential offered by the 'template', a file containing the master (sub)titles in English and used as the basis for translation into all languages required in a given project.

In emphasising the value of norms as a heuristic tool in the field of Translation Studies and their major contribution to the evolution of Descriptive Translation Studies, Stavroula Sokoli proposes bringing in an evaluative element. In *Subtitling Norms in Greece and Spain* she explains that the mere description of translation behaviour for its own sake may not provide useful results, whereas the study of norms is bound to give insight to the intersubjective sense of what is 'proper', 'correct', or 'appropriate'. Since norms are not directly observable, a possible approach to them is through their manifestations, whether textual or extra-textual. The focus in her contribution is on textual sources of norms, that is, regularities in the choices made by subtitlers, as manifested in the translated films themselves. The texts under study are the subtitled versions in Spanish and Greek of the films *The English Patient* (Anthony Minghella, 1996) and *Notting Hill* (Roger Michell, 1999). Given the paper's qualitative and descriptive nature, rather than laws or absolute truths, possible explanations are proposed and more hypotheses are generated, which in turn become the basis for future research. Sokoli's proposals can be used not only to explain and predict the way subtitles are done, but also to train future subtitlers.

Łukasz Bogucki's contribution, *Amateur Subtitling on the Internet*, looks at Polish subtitles of the film *The Fellowship of the Ring* in order to assess the criteria for quality assessment and their application to audiovisual translation. As a voice-over country, Poland has had little subtitling tradition to date, and only feature films are subtitled for their cinema release. However, recently a new kind of subtitling has developed. With the help of freeware computer programs and the Internet, amateur

subtitling is undertaken by non-professionals and governed by dramatically different constraints than professional subtitling. Often, the Source Text (ST) is digitised from a low-quality recording, and the end result – that is the subtitles in the Target Language (TL) – is conditioned by how much the subtitle producer has heard and understood from the original dialogue. As amply illustrated in Bogucki's contribution, this approach is likely to result in a multitude of mistakes and misinterpretations.

While subtitles are translated texts usually displayed below the image, as on a cinema or television screen, surtitles are most often displayed above the stage, in live opera and theatre performances. In his contribution entitled *The Art and Craft of Opera Surtitling*, Jonathan Burton highlights the fact that subtitling and surtitling differ substantially in their requirements and techniques, and proceeds to discuss surtitling as the most common approach to the translation of operatic texts. He offers a detailed analysis of the process, without forgetting the problems and pitfalls facing translators in this specialised field.

Lucile Desblache's contribution, *Challenges and Rewards of Libretto Adaptation*, also has music at its core. Translating for the stage means being torn between remaining faithful to the author's intentions and providing a version of the text which takes into account a range of other factors. The original message, with its cultural references and context, must be communicated to the audience, but the transfer of non-semantic aspects of the ST, as well as some extra-textual aspects, is of vital importance to successful adaptation. These factors must all be taken into consideration in libretto adaptation, but in addition, the special nature of opera imposes musical restrictions on the text, as the music cannot be changed and dictates, to a certain degree, which words can be used. Surtitling has been in existence for over two decades and has now been adopted by most opera houses. Yet, in certain cases, the decision is still made to adapt libretti for live performances. Drawing from her own experience of writing the French version of *Albert Herring*, a comic chamber opera by Benjamin Britten, the author discusses the problems encountered in translation work of this kind. Three orders of difficulty are identified relating to cultural equivalence, humour and rhyming.

Part II, **Revoicing**, is centred on the technique of replacing the soundtrack of the original audiovisual programme. Seen by many as the opposing strategy to subtitling, the arguments in favour or against each of these two approaches have been commonly debated in the existing literature. In *Dubbing versus Subtitling: Old Battleground Revisited*,

Jan-Emil Tveit attempts to assess the pros and cons of dubbing and subtitling, and to determine if either of the two is the 'better' option. Included among the disadvantages of subtitling are loss of information due to the transition from spoken to written mode as well as the frequently occurring failure to convey the dialectal and sociolectal features of spoken language. In addition, problems resulting from visual, spatial and decoding constraints may cause further difficulties if subtitling is the chosen method. However, considering the loss of authenticity and trans-national voice qualities in dubbing, not to mention the fact that it is more costly and time-consuming, the author concludes that, on the whole, the subtitling approach to audiovisual translation is to be preferred to dubbing.

As mentioned above, revoicing can be carried out in two different ways: by completely erasing the voices of the source programme (dubbing) or by juxtaposing a new soundtrack to the original one (voice-over, interpreting, audio description). As is well known, Italy is commonly labelled a 'dubbing country' which, together with Austria, France, Germany and Spain, has adopted a tradition of dubbing rather than subtitling, the preferred mode of audiovisual translation in Greece, Portugal, Scandinavia and the UK. However, the situation in dubbing countries is rapidly changing as a choice between dubbing and subtitling is increasingly becoming available. In their contribution concerned with the level of audience tolerance to dubbing in Italy, *The Perception of Dubbing by Italian Audiences*, Rachele Antonini and Delia Chiaro discuss the results of a large-scale research project which set out to explore and assess the quality of dubbed television programmes. Based on a corpus of over three hundred hours of dubbed television programmes and by means of web technology, over five thousand Italian viewers were tested on their perception of dubbed Italian. After conducting an ANOVA multivariate analysis of the raw data, an index was created, accounting for the perception of linguistic naturalness in dubbed Italian by viewers. After analysing the responses of a robust sample of randomly selected viewers, the results seem to point towards a certain tolerance of what viewers recognise as being unnatural, an acceptance of linguistic features adopted on screen which are virtually non-existent both in autochthonous Italian fictional programmes and in established electronic corpora of naturally occurring Italian.

The double transfer of a literary work to the screen and of the resulting film into a different culture, generates a series of highly interesting and mutually influential relationships between two cultures, involving three different types of transfer, namely: film adaptation, literary

translation and audiovisual translation. The aim of Susana Cañuelo Sarrión's contribution, *Transfer Norms for Film Adaptations in the Spanish–German Context*, is two-fold. First she identifies the works from a corpus of Spanish films based on literary works and produced between 1975 and 2000 which have reached the German market and sets out to analyse them from a Polysystem Theory perspective, taking into account the characteristics of German cinematography. Second, a number of transfer norms for film adaptations is proposed on the basis of recurring patterns detected in adaptations of literary works in Spain and their subsequent distribution and reception in Germany. In an audiovisual market dominated by English-spoken productions, Cañuelo Sarrión's contribution has the virtue of widening the scope of languages involved to German and Spanish.

In *Voice-over in Audiovisual Translation*, Pilar Orero examines the many definitions and descriptions from the field of Translation Studies for the audiovisual translation mode known as voice-over, in which two soundtracks in two different languages are broadcast at the same time. She then describes the technique of translation for voice-over taking into consideration a distinction which, suggested by Luyken *et al.* (1991), has never been properly developed, namely the difference in the process depending on whether the translation takes place during the production or during the post-production phases.

As an audiovisual translation mode, interpreting has received very little attention by academics or professionals in the past. In *Broadcasting Interpreting: A Comparison between Japan and the UK*, Tomoyuki Shibahara addresses the question of conformity to different house styles. The definition of the term 'broadcasting interpreter' and its history are discussed as are the many differences in broadcasting style between Japan and the UK. For example, broadcasting interpreting at the BBC Japanese Unit emphasises the quality of Japanese, while accuracy is the top priority at Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK). However, both broadcasting organisations require their interpreters to edit the information. Based on his own experience, the author describes the interpreting style, policy and quality control systems of the above two organisations. In addition, he provides a comparison of the employment style of both the BBC and NHK as well as an analysis of the pros and cons of working as a full-time member of staff and as a freelance interpreter.

Part III of the volume contains contributions discussing **Accessibility to the Media**. In countries such as the UK and the USA, subtitling as a concept is usually understood as intralingual (English into English)

subtitling for the deaf and hard-of-hearing (SDH). However, in Portugal, Greece and the Scandinavian countries, for instance, it will be interlingual (English into Portuguese, Greek or any of the Scandinavian languages) open subtitling that comes to mind. In these countries, interlingual subtitling for the deaf and hard-of-hearing is rarely seen as a specific kind of subtitling. Even though some DVDs now carry the option of interlingual SDH, this is still not common practice, perhaps under the assumption that standard interlingual subtitles offer enough information for all, regardless of the fact that some viewers might have a hearing impairment. As discussed by Josélia Neves in *Interlingual Subtitling for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing* this particular group of viewers has special needs when it comes to gaining true access to audiovisual material. In some respects, standard interlingual subtitles offer more information than they are able to absorb; in others, an extra input needs to be added for the full semiotic message to be conveyed adequately. Looking into the future and taking advantage of television turning digital and interactive, Neves advocates the production of multiple solutions (dubbing, interlingual subtitles, intralingual and interlingual SDH, adapted subtitling) for each audiovisual programme so that they can best suit the specific needs of different audiences.

Audio description is the other main technique aimed at widening accessibility to the media for viewers with sensory disabilities. After giving a brief introduction to what audio description is, Andrew Holland, in *Audio Description in the Theatre and the Visual Arts: Images into Words*, offers an informative account of the role of audio describers, professionals who act as the eyes of the visually impaired and transfer what they see into words. They express and bring alive, verbally, what they see at the same time as the action takes place, on stage or on the screen. Focusing on audio description for the theatre, Holland equates the importance of the audio describer's sensitivity with the task of relating the plot and action of a theatre or screen performance. Providing an audience with the subtext or the unspoken message of a production is often as important as conveying facts, if not more so. Audio description represents a form of audiovisual translation that is rapidly gaining increasing attention as the needs of the visually impaired are beginning to receive the degree of concern more frequently granted to the hard-of-hearing in the past.

The Internet has meant a revolution in our lives in general, and in the field of translation and business in particular. In their contribution, *Usability and Website Localisation*, Mario de Bortoli and Jesús Maroto

Ortiz-Sotomayor discuss the limited success as well as the problems encountered by big international companies when translating their English websites into the languages of the main foreign markets. According to the authors, for a site to be well received and successful in the twenty-first century it has to address the unconscious hidden aspects of what constitutes a community. Localisation needs to build in an in-depth knowledge of the local culture which in turn means that a multilingual website cannot be researched and developed in English and then simply sent off to be translated; rather, every aspect needs to be discussed and studied prior to development and subsequent implementation. Addressing these cultural differences requires the early attention of professionals with expertise in a variety of fields. Only through a synthesis of interdisciplinary expertise will there be a guarantee of the enormous benefits that globalisation can offer to truly international business.

Part IV, **Education and Training**, is devoted to the teaching and training of future experts and professionals in the field of subtitling. The most distinctive feature of subtitling is the need for economy of translation. There is rarely enough space and time to fit all potentially transferable material in an audiovisual programme onto the stipulated number of lines and characters. This is where the subtitler's sensitivity to plot, character and film narrative becomes crucial in order to determine the information to keep in and to leave out. But how can this sensitivity be defined? And how does it actually work?

In his contribution, *Teaching Screen Translation: The Role of Pragmatics in Subtitling*, Erik Skuggevik looks at the issue of the sensitivity of the subtitler as linked to several translation strategies, providing students and trainees with underused tools to break down the constituents of both the dialogue of the original and the subtitles of the translated programme. Drawing from the Speech Act Theory developed by Grice (1975) and the six functions of communication identified by Jakobson (1960), the author proposes an analysis of communication that enables us to quantify the constituents of subtitling more closely.

In his search for useful tools for the subtitler, Christopher Taylor draws from the potential offered by the multimodal transcription as devised by Thibault and Baldry (2000). In *Pedagogical Tools for the Training of Subtitlers*, he discusses how this methodology allows for the minute description of film texts, thereby enabling subtitlers to base their translation choices on the meaning already provided by other semiotic modalities contained in the text such as visual elements, music, colour, and camera positioning. This process, though time-consuming has

proved to be an extremely valid pedagogical instrument. A second stage in this research has led to the creation of transcriptions based on phasal analysis, following the ideas of Gregory (2002). Film texts are divided into phases and sub-phases based on the identification of coherent and harmonious sets of semiotic modalities working together to create meaning in recognisable chunks, rather in the manner of written text. Such texts are analysed in terms of their phasal construction, and also in terms of the transitions separating the phases. This further extension of the original tool provides the basis for a thorough analysis of any film text, and provides a useful addition to the pedagogy of film translation.

As mentioned before, audiovisual translation is closely linked to technology and any new advances are bound to have a knock-on effect on the discipline, particularly on subtitling. The Internet has been one of such advances. Tutors face new challenges in the global era and perhaps the most revolutionary is the proliferation of online multimedia courses in higher education. As discussed in Francesca Bartrina's contribution, *Teaching Subtitling in a Virtual Environment*, tutors need to transfer teaching skills from the face-to-face classroom to the virtual environment. This in turn gives rise to new trends in teaching methods and calls for the acquisition of new skills in the use of Information and Communication Technology. More specifically, in the case of online subtitling courses, it means that instructors need to stay abreast of innovations in digital subtitling technology. Bartrina's contribution deals with the challenge posed by virtual courses to the teaching of subtitling and with the way skills of future professionals may be developed by online learning.

The final contribution in this volume, by Annamaria Caimi, *Subtitling: Language Learners' Needs vs. Audiovisual Market Needs*, highlights the importance of subtitling in language learning and suggests possible convergences between linguistic, educational and economic goals. Such an approach requires meeting different expectations and interests, which can be accomplished by encouraging the distribution of audiovisual programmes with subtitles, in order to introduce foreign languages through entertainment. The educational objectives, which consider subtitling as a linguistic product, are quality-oriented, whereas the economic objectives, whose main concern is the distribution of subtitled audiovisual programmes, are quantity-oriented. In order to satisfy both needs, the author tackles the issue from three different perspectives: (1) the linguistic perspective, which focuses on the accuracy and appropriateness of language transfer through the application of principles of translation theory; (2) the foreign language



teacher's perspective, whose priority is to single out the most natural methods and techniques to facilitate foreign language acquisition; (3) the audiovisual marketer perspective, whose task is to meet the requirements of consumers in order to reach and maintain full demand for the product.

It is hoped that these seventeen studies will together constitute a rounded vision of the many different ways in which audiovisual programmes cross linguistic barriers and frontiers and, in particular, of the importance of audiovisual translation at the present time.

## Notes

1. Many countries, for example, Belgium, Canada, the Netherlands, the UK and USA, have established targets to provide SDH for 100% of their television programmes (Remael, 2007). As for AD and sign language interpreting, the targets are lower, at between 10% and 20% (Orero, 2007).
2. The creation of the *Centro Español de Subtitulado y Audiodescripción* (CESyA) is a good example of the type of initiatives taken by some countries. More information on this centre can be found on [www.cesyA.es](http://www.cesyA.es).

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