Mikołaj Deckert (ed.)

# Audiovisual Translation: Research and Use

## 2nd Expanded Edition

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This book explores two strands of Audiovisual Translation referred to as
"research" and "use". As their points of convergence as well as divergence
are brought to light, the contributors show that the two tend to overlap and
cross-pollinate. The inquiries of linguistic, cultural, sociological, computational,
educational and historical nature presented in the book give a comprehensive
up-to-date account of AVT as an expanding and heterogeneous, yet internally
coherent, field of scientific and professional endeavour.

"*The book offers a good balance of chapters dealing with new topics and chapters
dealing with more established AVT topics from new angles. It is a must read for TS
students and academics but also for practitioners and for translators from other
domains, given the increased prominence and diversity of AVT modes both in TS
research and translation practice.*"

Professor Aline Remael
University of Antwerp
Chair of the Department of Applied Linguistics, Translators and Interpreters

**The Editor**
Mikołaj Deckert is Assistant Professor at the Department of Translation Studies,
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Audiovisual Translation: Research and Use

# ŁÓDŹ STUDIES IN LANGUAGE

Edited by Barbara Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk and Łukasz Bogucki

VOLUME 53

PETER LANG

Mikołaj Deckert, ed.

# Audiovisual Translation: Research and Use

2nd Expanded Edition

**PETER LANG**

# Contents

# Introduction

## Audiovisual Translation: Research and Use

Audiovisual Translation (AVT) is now widely considered the most thriving and exciting subfield of Translation Studies. At the same time, due to the fast pace of developments it continues to be visibly under-researched and criticism of the traditional type is voiced with regard to the postulated gap between theory and practice. In response to that, the volume's objective is to explore two strands of AVT that are tentatively referred to as "research" and "use". Vitally, rather than to argue that these two are mutually exclusive or even easy to delineate as discrete categories in the first place, we hope to show they tend to overlap and cross-fertilise. The collection seeks to bring to light their points of convergence, as well as divergence.

The *research* component in its most common sense naturally covers the discussion of scientific studies, which is the case in this book, too. However, the component also deals with two other salient dimensions. One has to do with illustrating translation research methodologies that effectively supplement the more traditional ones – such as electroencephalography (EEG) and computational stylistics. The other dimension is focused on the challenges of training prospective researchers. The *use* part, in turn, deals with subjects such as the agendas motivating AVT mode selection as well as accessibility of multimodal content within particular institutional and national configurations. It also looks into the didactic facet of *using* AVT – in the language teaching classroom.

The collection opens with Anna Matamala's article "Mapping audiovisual translation investigations: research approaches and the role of technology" which provides an overview of the thematic foci of AVT. As the author takes a primarily technological vantage point, in addition to talking about the past and present she comes up with predictions. Technology is also central to the contribution by Rafaella Athanasiadi. In her article "Exploring the potential of machine translation and other language assistive tools in subtitling: a new era?" the author conducts a user-oriented scrutiny of current advances that enable process optimisation. A more historical account of translation practice, again making use of the prism of technology, is given by Janusz Wróblewski in the paper "Problems of AVT in the 1980s and 1990s". The author talks about numerous authentic examples of issues faced by the translator, of both prototypically translational and more general professional nature. The paper "Polish audience preferences regarding audiovisual translation: a reception study" by Mikołaj Deckert and Łukasz Bogucki has been translated from Polish to offer yet another practically-oriented perspective in

this second edition of the book. The authors discuss the findings of a study on perceptions of AVT across modes and audiences.

The contributions that follow can be grouped around policy matters conditioned by social and political considerations. Federico M. Federici in his paper titled "AVT in the media: emergencies through conflicting words and contradictory translations" investigates the translation of online versions of newspapers in the context of crises. Drawing from the Italian mediascape, he convincingly describes cases of *hybridity*, with its motivating factors and implications. The article "Media accessibility in the Czech Republic" by Veronika Šnyrychová makes up for the research gap concerning the Czech regulations – and compliance therewith – on making it possible for audiences with vision and hearing impairments to access TV content. In turn, the contribution "Power, society and AVT in Turkey: an overview" by Ayşe Şirin Okyayuz addresses diachronically the socio-political underpinnings of mechanisms and practices shaping AVT, whereby it is understood both as a product and a mode.

Another group of papers shed light on some of the most conspicuous problem areas that have been isolated within Translation Studies so far. In her paper "When intertextual humour is supposed to make everyone laugh… Even after translation" Rebeca Cristina López González draws examples from a dataset of 14 productions yielding a total of several hundred cases to talk about the strategies and techniques used to render animated feature films. The article by Hussein Mollanazar and Zeinab Nasrollahi titled "Official and non-official subtitles in Iran: a comparative study" uses an appraoch that the authors define as descriptive, comparative and geared towards the target text. Applying a five-component model of translation strategies, they examine the decision patterns found in official translations and those authored by fansubbers. Agnieszka Szarkowska, Łukasz Dutka, Olga Pilipczuk and Krzysztof Krejtz in their paper "Respeaking crisis points. An exploratory study into critical moments in the respeaking process" utilise the measures of frustration and concentration to inquire into respeaker cognitive load. The technique of EEG applied here is clearly indicative of the current and future methodological developments in AVT studies. Methodology itself is key in the paper "Old questions, new answers: computational stylistics in audiovisual translation research" by Agata Hołobut, Jan Rybicki and Monika Woźniak. The authors show that stylometric examination – employing methods such as cluster analysis of the most frequent word frequencies and lexical density – serves as an invaluable source of information that can be supplemented qualitatively to gain well-informed insights into constructs such as author, genre and epoch signals, for example. As she gives an answer to the research question formulated in the

title of her paper – "Factors that influence the occurrence of partial subtitling in Malayalam polyglot movies" – Minu Sara Paul carefully considers the parameters of viewer expectations, language pair type and the subtitles' discursive role as the major sources of motivation. In a similar vein, Camilla Badstübner-Kizik's "*Multilingualism in the movies*. Languages in films revisited" surveys the prominent models and reflects upon several cases of film multilingualism. The author also productively positions the discussion in the didactic academic setting.

The training aspect is then focused upon in two of the collection's final contributions. In "Teaching AVT research at BA level: didactical reflections from a local perspective" by Gernot Hebenstreit AVT is discussed as a research subject to be pursued by students. The author's detailed observations draw on his experience from a seminar conducted at the University of Graz. That thread is continued in the article "Gaining more benefits from a film lesson: integrated subtitles" by Anna Rędzioch-Korkuz. She reports on an experimental study designed to probe the potential of using subtitled clips in EFL classes, with a focus on vocabulary retention.

All in all, a total of 14 articles by established translation scholars and early-career researchers from institutions based in Austria, the Czech Republic, India, Iran, Italy, Poland, Spain, Turkey and the UK represent an impressive range of complementary perspectives. Inquiries of linguistic, cultural, technological, sociological, computational, educational as well as historical nature combine to create a fairly comprehensive and very up-to-date account of AVT as an expanding and heterogeneous, yet internally coherent, field of scientific endeavour and professional practice.

As impetus to this volume was given by the Intermedia 2016 conference held in Łódź, I wish to warmly thank all the people who made the event possible and successful: the participants, members of the Intermedia AVT Research Group and prof. Łukasz Bogucki who has been a major driving force.

Mikołaj Deckert, January 2019

Anna Matamala, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

# Mapping audiovisual translation investigations: research approaches and the role of technology

**Abstract:** This article maps audiovisual translation research by analysing in a contrastive way the abstracts presented at three audiovisual translation conferences ten years ago and nowadays. The comparison deals with the audiovisual transfer modes and topics under discussion, and the approach taken by the authors in their abstracts. The article then shifts the focus to the role of technology in audiovisual translation research, as it is considered an element that is impacting and will continue to impact both research and practice in this field. Relevant research in audio-related, text-related and image-related technologies applied to audiovisual translation is summarised. The last section briefly discusses how technological tools can also help audiovisual translation professionals, users and researchers.

## 0. Introduction

Research in audiovisual translation (AVT) is thriving. A lot has been done in recent years, and a lot can be done in the near future. The continuous transformation of a society where audiovisual content is ubiquitous, technology is paramount and citizens are becoming netizens impacts directly on AVT practices and, by extension, on AVT research. The interest in audiovisual transfer modes such as dubbing, subtitling or voice-over has expanded to include media accessibility related modalities such as audio description (AD), audio subtitling, subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing (SDH) or sign language interpreting in the media. Long-established descriptive approaches are supplemented by applied investigations, by technologically-based research and by empirical studies on the process and on the end-users' reception. Individual scholars are giving way to teams of researchers with different backgrounds joining efforts at an international level in order to approach AVT from an interdisciplinary perspective and gain a better understanding of the field. And all this research often impacts directly on society, because researchers are more and more involved in knowledge transfer activities.

In this article I aim to take stock of what has been done in recent years in AVT research and suggest future avenues, focusing specifically on the role of technology. First, I will try to elucidate whether the optimistic tone of the first paragraph correlates with reality. This is why I will begin the article by looking back into the history of AVT research and comparing the picture I obtain to the present situation. This broad image will give way to a close-up in which the focus will be

AVT research in relation to technology, as I consider it can have a remarkable impact on the field.

## 1. Mapping audiovisual translation research

To gain an overview of the evolution of the field, the abstracts from three seminal conferences on AVT held about ten years ago and three recent conferences were collected. The events under analysis were the following:

- In So Many Words, 2004, University of Surrey (London) (ISMW).
- Between Text and Image. Updating Research in Screen Translation, 2005, University of Bologna at Forlì (BTM).
- Media for All conference, 2005. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (M4A).
- Intermedia, 2016, University of Lodz (INTER).
- Linguistic and cultural representation in audiovisual translation, 2016, Sapienza Università di Roma & Università degli Studi di Roma Tre (LCRAV).
- 6th International Conference Media for All. Audiovisual Translation and Media Accessibility: Global Challenges, 2015. University of Western Sydney (M4A-6).

A relevant and long-running conference such as Languages and the Media, which takes place in Berlin every two years, could not be considered due to lack of available materials within the time-frame this analysis was carried out.

The abstracts were analysed manually in order to shed light on the main transfer modes, approaches, and topics presented at the conferences from a contrastive point of view. The fact that abstracts may not always accurately reflect the final presentation and the fact that the analysis was carried out by one individual scholar are some of the limitations of the present study, but it is my believe that this tentative mapping of the field can still provide interesting insights into the evolution of AVT research.

First of all, the audiovisual transfer modes were considered. Table 1 reflects the percentages of abstracts dealing only with just one transfer mode, dealing with more than one at the same time or simply not specifying the transfer mode.

*Table 1.  Audiovisual transfer modes in conferences*

| AVT MODES | ISMW | BTM | M4A | TOTAL | M4A-6 | LCRAV | INTER | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dubbing | 20.99 | 40.91 | 17.14 | 26.3 | 7.27 | 36.21 | 11.76 | 18.41 |
| Subtitling | 37.04 | 31.82 | 17.14 | 28.67 | 45.45 | 31.03 | 23.53 | 33.34 |
| Dubbing and subtitling | 13.58 | 9.09 | 5.71 | 9.46 | 1.82 | 1.72 | 5.88 | 3.14 |
| Voice-over | 6.17 | 0 | 0 | 2.06 | 5.45 | 3.45 | 2.94 | 3.95 |
| Audio description | 3.70 | 0 | 14.29 | 6 | 9.09 | 0 | 17.65 | 8.91 |
| SDH | 2.47 | 0 | 14.29 | 5.58 | 9.09 | 1.72 | 5.88 | 5.57 |
| SDH & AD | 0.00 | 0 | 5.71 | 1.9 | 1.82 | 3.45 | 2.94 | 2.74 |
| Sign language | 0.00 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5.45 | 0 | 0 | 1.82 |
| Interpreting | 1.23 | 0 | 0 | 0.41 | 1.82 | 0 | 0 | 0.61 |
| Not specified | 14.81 | 18.18 | 25.71 | 19.57 | 12.73 | 22.41 | 29.41 | 21.52 |

Ten years ago, dubbing and subtitling gathered approximately the attention of the same percentage of papers (26.35% for dubbing, 28.67% for subtitling), totalling more than 50% of the presentations. A remarkable 9.46% dealt with both modalities, probably offering contrastive studies, and voice-over presence was anecdotical (2.06%). Audio description and subtitling for the deaf and hard-of-hearing concentrated around 13% of the papers, whilst around 20% did not mention or deal with a specific modality. When looking at each conference individually, one can observe that the presence of 40% of papers on dubbing in BTM impacts directly on the total percentage of dubbing, whilst the relative relevance of AD and SDH in M4A compensates for the low percentages of these modalities in the other two conferences. As far as sign language and media interpreting, they do not seem to find a good forum for dissemination in AVT conferences.

When looking at current data, a drop in dubbing research and in comparative studies including both dubbing and subtitling is observed, whilst interest in subtitling increases globally. This trend would be even more striking if data from the conference in Rome (LCRAV), with a remarkable 36% of papers on dubbing, was not considered. Voice-over remains a rather neglected mode, even in voice-over countries, despite a slight increase in numbers. And, as far as media accessibility modes are concerned, there is a slight increase overall, but lower than expected. This is probably due to the effect of the first M4A conference, where the focus

was on media accessibility and a high number of papers were already presented on these modalities, whilst in its sixth edition (M4A-6) the approach was not so specific and subtitling for hearing audiences was given more attention. Similarly to ten years ago, sign language and media interpreting present low numbers, and a significant number of abstracts do not specify any transfer mode.

Summing up, the previous data show that in 2004–2005 the focus of interest were traditional modes (subtitling, dubbing and voice-over totalled 66.54%) and media accessibility related modes amounted 13.48%. More recently, interest in media accessibility has increased up to almost 20%, and research presented at conferences dealing with traditional modes has decreased (less than 60%). The previous data also show some regional variation, with a stronger interest in dubbing in the Italian conferences.

The second step in the analysis was to highlight the approach taken, following a top-down approach in which four categories were pre-established: theoretical, descriptive, reception and technological papers. Despite the fact that most studies are built upon a theoretical framework that is generally made explicit in the abstracts and despite the fact that reception studies can be the result of a descriptive analysis, the aim was to choose the most relevant aspect in the abstract. Results are presented in Table 2.

*Table 2.  Approach to audiovisual translation research*

| Approach | ISMW | BTM | M4A | TOTAL | M4A-6 | LCRAV | INTER | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Theoretical | 8.86% | 13.64% | 2.86% | 8.45% | 3.64% | 3.45% | 6.06% | 4.38% |
| Descriptive | 75.95% | 50% | 80% | 68.85% | 72.73% | 84.48% | 63.64% | 73.62% |
| Reception | 5.06% | 27.27% | 8.57% | 13.64% | 16.36% | 8.62% | 21.21% | 15.40% |
| Technology and tools | 10.13% | 9.09% | 8.57% | 9.26% | 7.27% | 3.45% | 9.09% | 6.6% |

The previous data show, first of all, a drop in theoretical approaches to AVT. A theoretical framework usually sustains research but developing theoretical proposals seems to attract less interest nowadays, at least in AVT conferences. One wonders whether other fora, like non-specific translation conferences, are seen as a more suitable venue for this type of contribution. Secondly, and contrary to my initial expectations, descriptive approaches to translation have not decreased but have actually increased, from 68.85% to 73.62%. This has been probably influenced by the conference in Rome, where an overwhelming 84% of the abstracts presented descriptive research. Similarly, reception research has increased but not as much as was expected, moving from 13.64% to 15.40%, and papers dealing only

with technology or tools have surprisingly decreased This is probably due to the characteristics of LCRAV but also to the fact that technology nowadays permeates all the other categories.

Finally, regarding topics, a qualitative analysis was preferred, reaching the following conclusions: all conferences present a wide array of topics, showing the diversification of interests in the field, but the focus on cultural aspects, on training, and on describing specific practices maintains in similar values across conferences. Linguistic approaches still capture the interest of many researchers, but not as much as in the past, and new topics such as fan translation, crowdsourcing and multilingualism experience a considerable rise.

When going back to the views expressed in the first lines of this paper, one could say that the tone was a bit optimistic, but they correlate very well with the structure of the last conference under analysis, Intermedia 2016, where around 6% of the papers put the focus on theoretical approaches, around 60% are descriptive, around 20% are reception studies, and almost 10% deal with technology and tools.

## 2. Past, present and future: the role of technology in AVT

In the previous data research on technology as applied to AVT had a lower presence than expected, but this was attributed to the fact that technology can be a tool for all types of research. Another possible explanation is that very often this type of research is presented in other conferences with a stronger focus on technology. In spite of this situation, technology is and is expected to be key in many aspects of AVT: in the process of creating translations, in the process of delivering them, in the process of receiving them, and also in the process of researching AVT. This is why in this section I will shift the focus of the article and I will concentrate on technology. I will deal with some technologies which have played a significant role recently and point to other technologies which may have an impact in the short term, briefly discussing research which links technologies and AVT but also stressing out the role of technology in both the translation and research processes. This section does not pretend to be an exhaustive and detailed overview but a general approach that can help some readers become familiar with relevant research and, hopefully, find some inspiring ideas for the future.

### 2.1 Research on technologies applied to AVT

Technologies have been distributed in three main categories: technologies related to the audio (including speech), technologies related to the text, and technologies related to the visuals.

## 2.1.1  Speech and audio-related technologies

Various types of speech technologies have been researched in AVT such as speech recognition or text-to-speech, but also audio alignment or clean audio. Concerning speech recognition, respeaking has become the standard system for live intralingual subtitling and is defined by Romero-Fresco (2011:1) as a technique in which a respeaker listens to the original audio of a live programme or event and respeaks it, including punctuation marks and some specific features for the hearing impaired audience, to a speech recognition software, which turns the recognized utterances into subtitles on screen. Romero-Fresco (2011) presents a wide overview of this modality, which is an established practice in certain countries and is still under development in others, mainly due to the availability of proficient sound speech recognition system in some languages. Research on respeaking has focused on describing and analysing its features (Remael et al. 2014, Van Waes et al. 2013) but also testing its reception through various methodological tools, from questionnaires to eye-trackers (Romero-Fresco 2011). Works on creating metrics to analyse the quality of respoken subtitles have also been published (Dumouchel et al. 2011): from the NERD (Romero-Fresco 2011) to the NER model (Romero-Fresco and Martínez 2015). Nowadays, the skills required by the respeakers, as compared to interpreters, and respeaking for interlingual subtitles are two hot research topics (Szarkowska et al. 2015, 2016), and newer applications of respeaking such as the transcription of non-fictional content are being researched (Daniluk et al. 2015).

Speech recognition has also been used to automatically generate subtitles, a function included by popular tools such as YouTube and Google. Research-wise, the SAVAS project has been one of the most relevant in the field: focusing on the broadcast news domain, it has not only developed a remote respeaking system for collaborative subtitling (S.Respeak!), but it has also created a speaker independent transcription and subtitling application (S.Scribe!), which automatically transcribes pre-recorded audio and video files into time-aligned enriched subtitles, and an online subtitling system (S.Live!), which automatically transcribes live audio into configurable and well-formatted subtitles (Álvarez et al. 2015). The generation of the automatic subtitles is based on the application of Large Vocabulary Continuous Speech Recognition plus other technological components. In fact, speech recognition is often combined with other technologies and components to carry out relevant tasks, such as long audio alignment, speech and speaker recognition or language tracking (Álvarez et al. 2014).

In a different domain, the educational one, the project Translectures (Silvestre-Cerdà et al. 2012) implemented transcription (and translation) systems for online video lectures and, more recently, a new step has been taken in the EMMA project

to transcribe (and translate) massive open online courses (Brouns et al. 2015). As explained by Valor-Miró et al. (2015), these transcription systems not only can be used by non-native speakers or deaf and hard-of-hearing viewers needing subtitles, but also for other uses beyond AVT such as lecture content searches, content summarisation or information retrieval.

Automatic transcription through speech recognition has also been applied together with a speaker diarization process to automatically extract AD transcripts (Delgado et al. 2015). Still, the acoustically noisy conditions of fiction films audios, the fact that they do not constitute a restricted domain, and the presence of spontaneous and overlapping speech are challenges to overcome.

When looking at the opposite, i.e. text converted into speech, investigations have focused mainly on the voicing of AD. Szarkowska (2011) led a project in Poland in which text-to-speech audio descriptions (TTS AD) were assessed in various contexts: in a monolingual feature film in Polish, in a dubbed educational TV series for children, in a foreign fiction film with voice-over, in a no-fiction film with audio subtitling and in a dubbed feature film. Results indicate that most participants accept TTS AD although it is not the preferred solution. Similar results were found in Catalan by Fernández-Torné and Matamala (2015). Extensive research in the field is reported by Kobayashi et al. (2009), who describe the application of TTS AD in online videos on websites.

TTS is also used successfully in audio subtitling, especially in countries such as Sweden, Denmark or the Netherlands (Verboom et al. 2002). Research in this field, though, is more limited, and mainly focuses on technical solutions (Hanzlicek et al. 2008, Ljunglöf et al. 2012) or, to a lesser extent, on user reception experiments (Thrane 2013). Newer applications may be found in voice-over, where Ortiz-Boix and Matamala (forthcoming) have researched the application of TTS in wildlife documentaries, and the BBC has started a pilot on multilingual voiceover (http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/latestnews/2015/bbc-virtual-voiceover-translations).

Finally, noise reduction and speech enhancement technologies such as clean audio (Fuchs & Oetting 2014, Orero & Permuy Hércules de Solás, forthcoming) are also being researched as tools to improve access to audiovisual content for hearing impaired audiences, and will probably yield interesting results in the near future. Possibilities are manifold, and the previously mentioned technologies and many others could undoubtedly have an impact in AVT research. As an example, speech emotion recognition (Koolagudi and Rao 2012) could be explored to automatically transfer emotions encoded in speech into written tags for those who cannot access the audio. Similarly, audio technology is omnipresent in dubbing processes but there is a considerable gap with research in the AVT field in this regard.

## 2.1.2 Text-related technologies

Technologies can be used to alter texts in various ways: by transferring it from one language to another, by assisting in this transfer or by making formal or linguistic changes to it. Translation memories, for instance, are extensively used in technical, scientific, financial and legal translation to control terminological consistency and speed up the translation of repetitive segments. Still, AVT has often been viewed as a modality that was too creative and too dependent on the image for such a tool to be useful, and research in this area has been limited to a few papers. Pérez Rojas (2014), for instance, describes how to automatically create translation memories for subtitling using translated books adapted into films. And Hanoulle et al. (2015a, 2015b) focus on documentary films and prove the usefulness of terminology-extraction software within translation memory tools as a support to audiovisual translators. Overall, though, as Díaz-Cintas (2015: 633) rightly points out, "little attention has been paid so far to the role that computer-aided translation (CAT) tools can play in subtitles or to the potential that translation memories and machine translation can yield in this field, although the situation is changing rapidly".

Indeed, an area in which the situation has changed rapidly is machine translation (MT), although the interest has generally been on subtitling (Popowich et al. 2000, Piperidis et al. 2004, Melero et al. 2006, Armstrong et al. 2006, De Sousa et al. 2011). Exhaustive research has been carried out within the SUMAT project (Del Pozo 2014), in which MT was implemented in seven language pairs using a corpus trained with both professional and amateur subtitles. Large-scale evaluations measured the output quality and productivity gain (Etchegoyhen et al. 2014). Beyond the media environment, but still dealing with audiovisual content, the EMMA project is currently researching the implementation of MT in translating educational video content (Brouns et al. 2015). Some research, though, put the focus on the end user and analyse the impact of the automatisation processes: in this regard, Matamala et al. (2015) prove that the usefulness of automatic subtitles correlates with the knowledge of the original language by end-users: whilst intralingual subtitles (involving speech recognition but not MT) prove useful for users with a B2 level of English, they do not affect positively users with higher proficiency; on the contrary, interlingual subtitles (involving both speech recognition and MT) may affect comprehension negatively in highly proficient participants due to a distracting effect.

Beyond the realm of the written word of subtitles, the ALST project (Matamala 2015) has researched at a smaller scale the inclusion of MT in the AD of fiction films, on the one hand, and in the voice-over of wildlife documentaries, on the other. The focus has been on the effort involved in post-editing, as it has been considered that MT without a revision is not fit for broadcasting. Ortiz-Boix and

Matamala (2016) compare the effort involved in translating two short wildlife documentary excerpts and the effort involved in post-editing their MT. Results show that post-editing is faster and involves less technical and cognitive effort. Ortiz-Boix and Matamala (forthcoming) also carry out a quality analysis at various levels, and observe that there are not striking differences between the overall quality of post-edited and translated wildlife documentary films. Similarly, Fernández-Torné and Matamala (2016) compare the effort involved in creating an AD from scratch, in translating it manually, and in post-editing its MT version. Results show that the objective effort in post-editing is lower, but the subjective effort perceived by participants is higher, a finding that highlights the need to consider not only productivity measures but also the views of professionals.

Apart from MT and translation memories, other text-related technologies have been researched in audiovisual content, although not so extensively and often outside the audiovisual translation research community: text simplification (Daelemans et al. 2004, Shardlow 2014), text compression (Aziz et al. 2012, Luotolahti and Ginter 2015) or text segmentation (Scaiano et al. 2010, Álvarez et al. 2016) are three worth mentioning. The integration of speech and text technologies has also been investigated in speech-to-speech translation projects such as EU-Bridge (http://project.eu-bridge.eu/).

### 2.1.3  Image-related technologies

Beyond the field of text and audio, image-related technologies open a wide array of possibilities in the audiovisual world, where audio and visual inputs interact. Whilst the previous technologies focused their research mostly in the subtitling domain, image-related technologies combined with natural language processing tools are opening new research grounds in the audio description field. In this regard, automatic description of images is being explored as a tool to improve accessibility to audiovisual content by blind and visually impaired audiences.

In the field of static images, social media are already implementing different services, both launched in 2016: Facebook's automatic alternative text which provides an automatic text description of a photo using object recognition technology (Voykinska et al. 2016) or Twitter's alternative text system, which adopts a manual approach. Concerning moving images, challenges are higher, but some research has already been developed in this area. Torabi et al. (2015) present a dataset of annotated videos based on audio descriptions, and Rohrbach et al. (2016) go a step further to propose a novel dataset with full length movies aligned with AD and movie scripts which are used to investigate a still challenging task: automatically describing scenes in natural language. The road ahead is a long one,

but audiovisual translation scholars should keep an eye on this type of research, so that the real implementation of this technology in the future can be adequately assessed.

Other interesting fields related to AVT are automatic sign language translation and signing avatars (Wolfe et al. 2015) or automatic lip synch (Hoon et al. 2014), to name just two. Still, very often this type of image-related research is discussed in computational fields and does not reach the AVT research community. Bigger projects involving researchers from different research grounds are needed to aim for technologies which have an impact on the end-user.

## 2.2  Tools to create and receive content

Apart from technology as the focus of research, technology is also the basis of tools to translate or adapt content and tools to consume content. Various researchers (Matamala 2005, Cerezo Merchán et al. 2016:131) have described the so-called audiovisual translation workstation, a workstation that changes continuously and is moving towards cloud-based solutions.

Regarding subtitling, for instance, there is a wide array of both professional and amateur software: free software (for instance, Aegisub, VisualSubSync, Subtitle Workshop, Gaupol, Jubler Subtitle Editor, Subtitle Creator, Subtitle Edit, Subtitle Processor, Gnome Subtitles, DivXLand Media Subtitler, Open Subtitle Editor) and professional software (WinCaps, Softwel Swift Create, Spot, EZTitles, FAB or SoftNI, among others). Their specifications vary and, whilst some allow one to create subtitles by respeaking, automatically detect shot changes, provide an audio level indication waveform and propose automatic timing of subtitling, among other features, others only offer basic functionalities. Some subtitling software such as SRT translator even supports machine translation (Athnasiadi 2015). But, as said before, the workstation of the professional is moving to the cloud: platforms such as ZOO subs or iMediaTrans (Díaz-Cintas 2015: 637), for instance, offer professional subtitling. And outside the professional world, crowdsubtitling platforms such as Amara take a different approach and provide user-friendly cloud-based interfaces where volunteers are given the time-coded subtitles and focus on the translation.

Options are more limited for revoicing software addressed to translators, either for dubbing or voice-over (see, for instance, Dialogspotting 2 by Zioaudio), because many professionals still rely on word processing software, at least in countries like Spain (Cerezo Merchán et al. 2016:132). It is in dubbing studios where spotting tools or recording technology is used, but this does not generally reach the translator. In fandubbing contexts, the focus is also put on tools that allow one

to record and synchronize the new language track (see, for instance, Dubroo), and automatic services are also offered by websites such as VideoDubber. Concerning audio description, on the contrary, the software offer is higher: from professionals tools such as Softel Swift ADePT or Fingertext to free tools such as MAGpie2, Livedescribe or YouDescribe, often for user-generated content and collaborative environments.

Research on user preferences or comparative analyses of tools do not abound. Effects of subtitling software on the process are analysed, for instance, by Aulavuori (2008). And Athnasiadi provides an overview of translation memories in AVT, showing how translation memories such as Transit NXT and cloud-based localisation platforms such as Transifex or XTM support subtitling files. Regarding AD, Vela Valido (2007) compares existing software in Spain and the USA. And Oncins et al. (2012) present an overview of existing subtitling software used in theatre and opera houses, and propose a universal solution to live media access which would include subtitling, AD and audio subtitling, among other features. Oncins et al.'s proposal links nicely the production and consumption processes. Indeed, at the other side of the chain, tools for receiving content are expanding. Cinema and television screens have been complemented, and sometimes surpassed, by second screens in mobiles, tablets and even glasses. A myriad of apps providing access to subtitles, audio description and dubbed tracks are now available. A non-exhaustive list would include apps such as MovieReading, WhatsCine, ArtAccés or MyLingoApp, but what is really needed is research on the usability of these apps (see, for instance, Walczak 2016) or second screens (Graham et al. 2015) by audiences.

The presence of so many technical solutions opens the door to many research questions. It remains to be seen the actual usage of many tools and functionalities both in professional and amateur environments, both at the production and the reception ends. And it remains to be seen how new developments will be integrated into existing tools to adapt to the needs of audiovisual content.

## 2.3  Technology for audiovisual translation research

To conclude this general overview, it should be stressed that technology is not only a research object but it is also improving the way scholars are carrying out their investigations.

The rise in process and reception research in AVT studies has widened the choice of devices to include eye-trackers (Perego 2012, Kruger et al. 2015) and tools that monitor electrophysiological reactions such as electroencephalography (Szarkowska et al. 2015), heart rate (Ramos 2016) or electrodermal activity

(http://pagines.uab.cat/nea/). Keylogging has also been used (Fernández-Torné and Matamala 2016, Ortiz-Boix and Matamala 2016), as well as screen recording software (Masse and Jud 2015). Still, the usage of these tools, except for the eye-tracker, is very recent.

The analysis of multimodal corpora has also implied the use of textual and multimodal corpus analysis tools such as ELAN (Matamala and Villegas 2016), both quantitative and qualitative. And needless to say that software for managing statistical information, and for creating and gathering data are commonplace these days. What is not so recurrent in the field of AVT is the use of online plat-forms to crowdsource microtasks, a practice found in other fields such as MT quality evaluation or transcription.

## 3.  Conclusions

This article has two different sections: on the first one, an overview of the field ten years ago and nowadays through the analysis of six conference abstracts has allowed to identify changes in research approaches, although they have not been as striking as initially expected. Indeed, the results of the analysis raise some interesting questions, such as the type of research that is presented in AVT con-ferences and the profile of the participants attending these conferences as well as the impact of regional interests on the research agenda. It would be interesting to analyse what sort of AVT-related investigations are presented in general transla-tion conferences but also in more technological venues, and it would be useful to propose truly interdisciplinary events, a task which is not easy but which would undoubtedly be enriching for the field. The correlation of the results of my analysis with actual publications in journals would also shed some light on the dissemina-tion strategies of AVT researchers.

Although technology was not as present as initially hypothesised in the con-ferences under analysis, it was observed that it permeates across various types of research proposals. Therefore, in the second part of the article, the focus has been put on technology, as it has been considered an element that is impacting and will continue to impact AVT in terms of research and practice. Technologically-based research linked to audiovisual transfer modes has been summarised, and some suggestions about future implementations have been put forward. Whilst some technologies are mature enough and have found their way into the professional arena, others are just beginning to be researched and are expected to yield inter-esting results in the near future. Still, this will only be possible if AVT scholars are involved in this type of research in truly interdisciplinary teams that not only

cater for technological developments but also take into account the impact on processes, professionals, products and end-users.

## Acknowledgements

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# Exploring the potential of machine translation and other language assistive tools in subtitling: a new era?

**Abstract:** In an effort to study the most effective approach for optimising the subtitling process, in terms of time and effort, this research sets out to explore the most recent developments in the field of subtitling technologies, as well as, to lay the foundations for a theoretical framework in the subtitling technologies field. Even if there have been projects that attempted to build machine translation engines with the aim to optimise subtitling, other language assistive tools like translation memories, which have been used in the translation industry extensively, have been paid less attention by both the industry and the academic world. Hence, this research focuses on the lack of commercial subtitling software which incorporates language assistive tools, and attempts to present what is available in the industry, what are the limitations of these type of applications and whether the incorporation of such tools is sought by their users. A quantitative study has been conducted for this purpose. The main conclusion that is drawn however, is that subtitling is stepping towards a new era since traditional subtitling software is gradually transformed into online, easily accessible and flexible applications.

## 1. Introduction

The endeavour of translating has changed radically since the 1990s. Translators nowadays are bombarded with translation software options, that aim in optimising the translation process. To name just a few, currently, there are numerous translation software applications, terminology extraction tools or even machine translation engines which translators have the opportunity to choose from while translating. However, shifting the focus to audiovisual translation, and specifically to subtitling, it can be agreed that less radical changes took place, at least until the introduction of machine translation systems through various projects which have developed machine translation engines for optimising the subtitling process.

This research sets out to discuss the latest advances in subtitling and the potential effects that these advancements can bring to the profession. An industry-oriented approach will be adopted on what is available in the industry at the moment, in the European context, in order to evaluate the tendencies of the industry and compare it with the relative academic research. Quantitative research has also been conducted in order to comprehend the needs of the end-users.

## 2.  Machine translation & subtitling

As Hutchins & Somers (c1992:1) argue, "the mechanisation of translation has been one of humanity's oldest dreams." In fact, former machine translation projects received enormous amounts of funding for creating a fully automated machine that could translate from one language to another; for example, the Caterpillar project of 1991 at CMU.

According to Hutchins (c1992:1),

> […] during the TMI-92 conference in Montreal, Jaime Carbonell gave some details of the contract signed in May 1992 between Caterpillar, the world's largest manufacturer of earth-moving equipment, and the Centre for Machine Translation at Carnegie-Mellon University for the development of a fully automatic translation system. The five-year multimillion dollar contract had been concluded after an extensive evaluation by Caterpillar […].

Machine translation is a multidisciplinary field, since it combines knowledge from distinct areas; from artificial intelligence to linguistics. According to the European Association for Machine Translation (EAMT) (online), "machine translation (MT) is the application of computers to the task of translating texts from one natural language to another."

MT systems can be categorised according to their architecture. For example, there are Rule-based Machine Translation (RbMT) systems, which depend on the linguistic rules that a human creates and inserts inside the system. In RbMT systems, very large amounts of bilingual and monolingual lexicons have to be manually incorporated (Safaba: Translation innovation, online).

Also, there are Statistical Machine Translation systems (SMT) which,

> […] use computer algorithms that explore millions of possible ways of putting smaller pieces of text together, in an effort to produce a translation that looks best. Statistical translation "models" consist of translations of words and phrases along with their statistical likelihood. These are learned automatically from previously translated text, creating a bilingual "database" of translations. New sentences are translated by a program (the decoder), which matches the source words and phrases with the database of translations, and searches the "space" of all possible translation combinations. A variety of fitness and preference scores are used to model a total score for each of the millions of possible translation candidates; an algorithm then selects and outputs the best scoring translation. (Safaba: Translation innovation, online)

In addition, there are hybrid systems that combine two of the above infrastructures. "Hybrid architectures intend to combine the advantages of the individual paradigms to achieve an overall better translation" (Hunsicker et al., 2012:312).

At the moment, there are MT systems that can be standalone downloadable applications, like PROMT, cloud-based platforms that allow the building of MT

engines, such as KantanMT, or even MT components integrated in translation software, like Wordfast Anywhere or SDL Trados Studio in the form of API connections. In fact, the integration of MT in translation software seems to be increasing nowadays. According to Lagoudaki (2008:263), "more and more Translation Memory (TM) systems […] are fortified with machine translation (MT) techniques to enable them to propose a translation to the translator when no match is found in his TM resources."

MT has started to infiltrate the translation industry and this can be seen by the various companies who sell MT solutions and knowledge at high prices. The purpose is to optimise the translation process, both in terms of time and effort, as well as keep a high level of terminology consistency. In fact, a field that requires this kind of optimisation is audiovisual translation, and more specifically subtitling. Subtitling is a good candidate because it does not posit the challenges that dubbing does, as it is not based on the prosody and speed of speech. Also, "[…] subtitling is considered to be one of the most expensive and time-consuming tasks an interested company needs to perform, since it is mainly carried out manually by experts. Typically, a 1-hour program requires around 7–15 hours of effort by humans" (MUSA, online). Therefore, as it can be inferred, subtitling is extremely demanding and time-consuming as a process, which could be benefited greatly by the aid of automated or semi-automated tools in order to increase its productivity. In fact, two projects (the MUSA and SUMAT project) that focused on the development of MT engines for subtitling will be briefly discussed below.

It should be noted that the infrastructure of MT engines for subtitling works differently from any other MT engine architecture because these engines require the incorporation of specialised components, like a speech recognition feature. Therefore, by combining some of the components that were implemented in the MUSA and SUMAT projects, I designed a model of a fully-automated MT engine for subtitling with the aim to provide a visual representation of how such a system for subtitling would work ideally. It is important to mention that this model is based on an SMT engine and not on a rule-based or hybrid engine.

*Figure 1.  A theoretical model of a MT engine for subtitling*
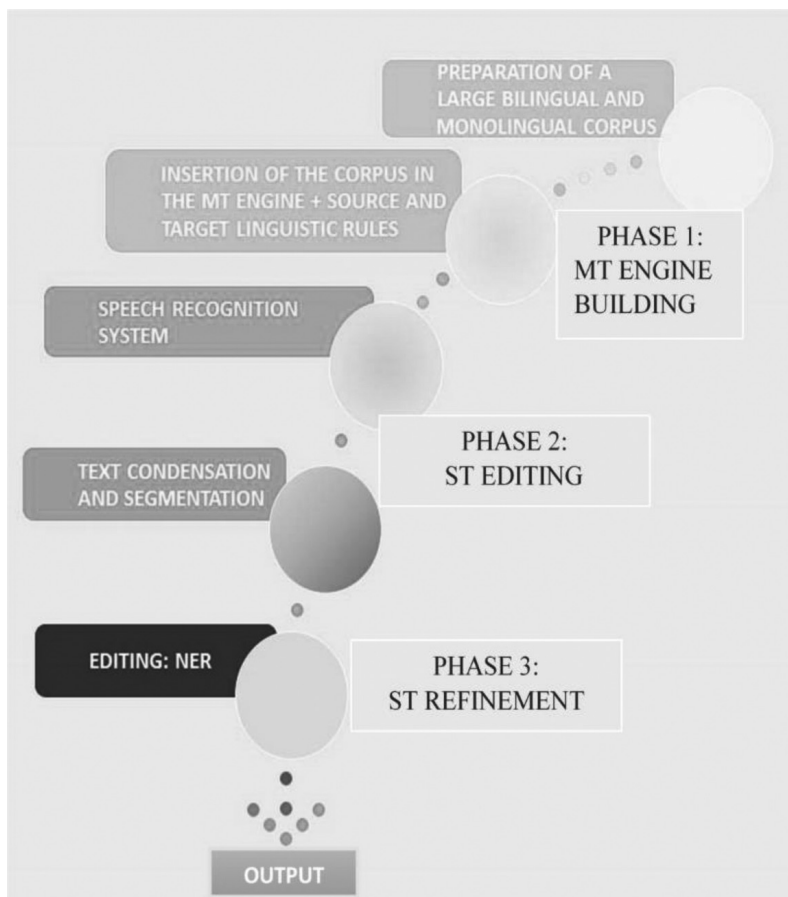


The above diagram divides the processing of the engine into three phases. The first phase is the preparation of the corpus as well its insertion into the system in order to build the engine. This step must always be followed when building a MT engine of any type. It is of paramount importance to create a bilingual[1] and a monolingual corpus of subtitles because the former type of data will be used by the engine as a reference point for the translation of new sentences and the latter will be used by the system as a 'shortcut' to the mechanics of the target language,

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1    .srt files aligned by a translation memory software.

for instance, the repetition of syntactic patterns of the TL is noticed and noted by the MT system and as a result it uses them before producing the output. Moreover, monolingual data can be used to narrow down the domain of the MT engine; e.g. scientific documentaries. Any additional source and target linguistic rules in the form of algorithms (which are created by computer programmers and computational linguists) should be inserted at this phase.

The second phase, ST editing, includes a speech recognition and a text condensation and segmentation component. In this step, the user inserts the video clip for subtitling. The speech recognition component in this diagram was a feature of the MT engine in the MUSA project. According to Piperidis et al. (2009:370), they used "an English automatic speech recognition (ASR) subsystem for the transcription of audio streams into text, including separation of speech vs. non-speech, speaker identification and adaptation to speaker's style". In other words, speech recognition is used to transcribe the script from the audio track that will be translated. This saves time if the script is missing or there is no time for human transcription. Also, it allows for automatic timecoding of the SL subtitles. The output of the speech recognition component is a timecoded script. When this process is complete, a text condensation and segmentation component is activated in order to make the raw source language script more suitable for MT. For example, if subtitles are missing subjects and articles, the MT engine will add them. This component was also a feature of the architecture of the MUSA MT engine and it basically operates as an automated pre-editing agent.

The third phase, namely ST refinement, includes the automated editing of the script in order to minimize the post-editing effort. NER (Named-entity recognition) is added in order to ensure that "certain word clusters will not be translated as separate words" (Arantza del Pozo, 2014:14). In general, NER usually divides linguistic items in pre-defined categories (for instance, names of persons). In this step, a human agent needs to intervene in order to add the specific word clusters that should not be translated. This component was tested and implemented in the SUMAT project. In other words, this works like a word stop list in translation software.

When all the phases are completed, the translation of subtitles, that were previously identified and transcribed through speech recognition, begins automatically. The timecodes of the transcribed subtitles are transferred into the translated script and hence the subtitler receives two .srt files and one .txt file. One of the .srt files includes the timecoded SL subtitles and the other .srt file includes the timecoded TL subtitles. The .txt file includes the SL script without the timecodes in order to be used as reference for post-editing.

Generally speaking, this diagram shows a fully automated MT system in which the human component is limited to the building of the MT engine and post-editing the engine's output. This does not mean however that the human component will be neglected. In fact, subtitlers can focus on the linguistic challenges of the script without spending additional time researching and translating terms since a first translation draft of the subtitles will be ready from the engine. In addition, the time for synchronizing the TL subtitles will be reduced to the minimum since the MT engine will also provide a timecoded script; making minor adjustments to the timecodes is not as time-consuming as timecoding it from the beginning.

The above MT model was designed as a fully automated MT system in order to highlight the benefits that an MT engine for subtitling can have for subtitlers, especially in terms of time. However, only through implementation can we evaluate the effectiveness of such an engine. Therefore, the two projects that implemented some of these components will be discussed below.

## 3. Building MT engines for subtitling projects

### 3.1 The MUSA project

The MUSA (MUltilingual Subtitling of multimediA content) project started in 2002 and lasted until 2005. It was a funded initiative of IST[2] whose goal was "the creation of a multimodal multilingual system that converts audio streams into text transcriptions, generates subtitles from these transcriptions and then translates the subtitles in other languages" (MUSA, online:1). A screenshot of the platform of this project is provided below. In addition, English, French and Greek demos can be found on the official website[3] of the project.

Based on Piperidis, et al. (2004), the MUSA project supported three European languages: English (as both a source and a target language) French and Greek (as target languages), and the primary audiovisual data involved BBC TV documentaries and news-related television programmes (ibid).

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2    Information Society Technologies.
3    (http://sifnos.ilsp.gr/musa/demos.html).

*Figure 2. The platform of the project MUSA*
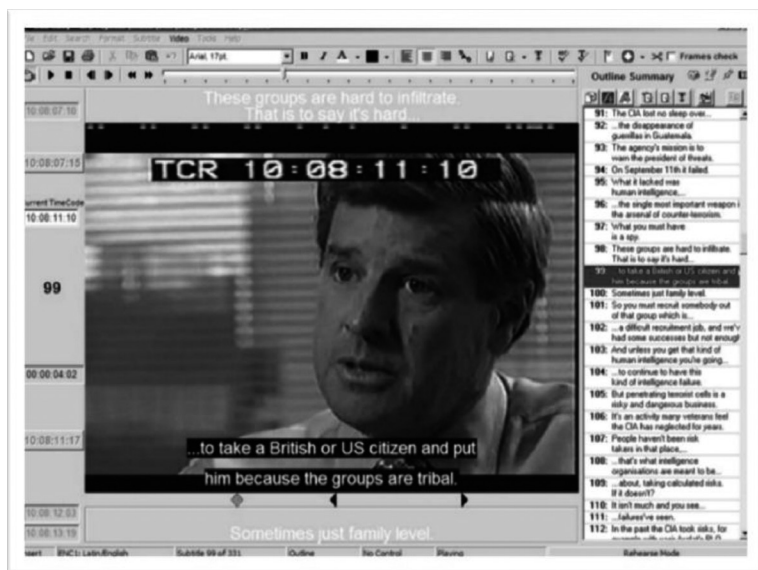


Generally speaking, MUSA was a very complex system with an integrated MT engine, translation memories, term substitution components (MUSA, online) and a high-quality speech recognition system (Institute for Language and Speech processing, online). However, Piperidis, Demiros and Prokopidis (2004) discussed the project's low quality output since the acceptability of the subtitles struggled to reach 50%. It should be mentioned, however, that the grammaticality and semantic acceptability of subtitles with targeted compression reached 70% (ibid). As Piperidis et al. (2004:17) argued, "a more simple computational model is feasible" and, in my opinion, perhaps more preferable. Taking everything into account, this project carved the path for future research since it basically showed that "an architecture for a multilingual subtitling system is implementable" (Piperidis et al., 2004:17).

## 3.2  EU-funded initiatives: The SUMAT project

The EU-funded MT project for subtitles called SUMAT ran between 2011 and 2014. According to Petukhova et al. (2012:21), the project aimed at building an online translation service that would be bidirectional "for nine European languages

combined into 14[4] different language pairs". The main goal of this project was to speed up the translation processes of subtitling companies on a large scale by semi-automating subtitling through a statistical MT engine (ibid:21). A figure showing the interface of this online translation system is provided below (Echezarreta, 2014).

*Figure 3.  Online service: Translate Page (Echezarreta, 2014:30)*



The results of this project were analysed according to five metrics. Hovy, King and Popescu-Belis (2003:4) argue that metrics are "internal and/or external attributes" of the MT software quality characteristics. A screenshot of the results is provided below.

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4    The targeted language pairs were: English-Dutch; English-French; English-German; English-Portuguese; English-Spanish; English-Swedish and Serbian-Slovenian" (Petukhova, et al., 2012:21).

*Figure 4. Final results of the project (Echezarreta, 2014:20)*
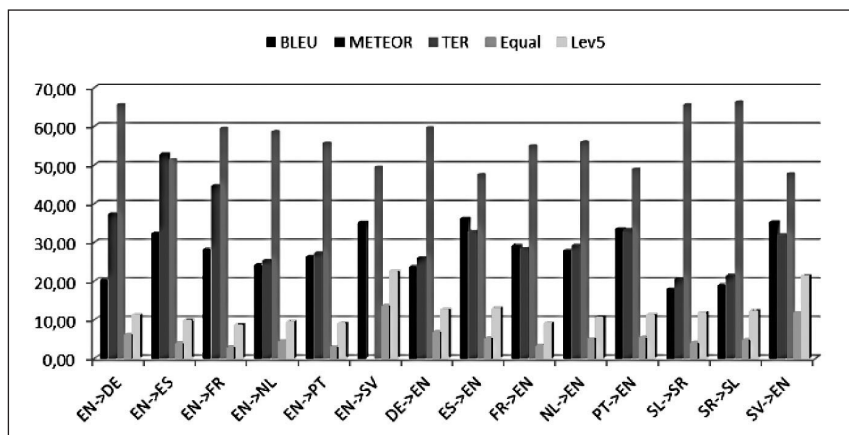


Papineni et al. (2002:314) explain that IBM's BLUE score metric, stands for "BiLingual Evaluation Understudy" and that it is basically "a virtual apprentice or understudy to skilled human judges." The higher the percentage the closer to human translation the output is. The above BLUE percentages are very low, and hence differ distinctly from what a subtitler would produce. For example, the Spanish into English language combination, that has the highest percentage, reaches only 36% whereas the second highest combination (English into Swedish) achieves around 34%.

In addition, a very useful measurement is the TER score which calibrates the quality of the MT engine. According to KantanMT (online), TER is an acronym for "Translation Error Rate […] and it measures the amount of editing that a translator/subtitler would have to perform to change a translation so it exactly matches a reference translation." The TER score is extremely useful because the translator/subtitler can have a realistic estimation of the time that needs to be invested in the project. It should be noted that the TER scores should always be low, although in the above chart they are very high, they even reach up to 65–67% (English-German), which means that a lot of editing is required in order to obtain a translation that matches a human translation.

According to Agarwal and Lavie (2008:1), the METEOR metric made its appearance in 2004 and it was developed in order to ameliorate "the correlation with human judgement of MT quality at the segment level." Its basic function is the estimation of the translation "by computing a score based on explicit word-to-word matches between the translation and a given reference translation" (ibid:1).

Like in the case of the BLEU metric, the aim of the METEOR metric is to achieve high percentages. The percentages here are better than those of the BLEU metric since the English-Spanish combination reaches 51%.

Furthermore, based on Volk's (2009) definition, the Equal metric compares the percentage of MT output with a reference text. The above results are very poor with the highest percentage to reach 12% (English-Swedish). In addition, Lev5 signifies the Levenshtein distance metric which calculates "the editing distance of at most 5 basic character operations" (deletions, insertions, substitutions) from the human translation (ibid:125). In this case, Lev5 scores are also poor since the highest percentage reaches 21% (English-Swedish).

The SUMAT project focused on the need of the industry to accelerate the subtitling process as much as possible. A very important conclusion that was drawn from the results of this project was the fact that even after so many years of research in the field of MT, MT still has not gained its place in the subtitling process in the industry yet, in fact, not even other automated tools like translation memories are part of the subtitling process (Arantza del Pozo, 2014). This was also confirmed by Lambourne[5] (2015) who argued from his experience that in Denmark translators still feel threatened by CAT tools. This is quite surprising, especially if we take into consideration how time-consuming the subtitling process is.

The SUMAT project (which was completed in 2014) is an online system whereas the MUSA project (which is older since it finished in 2004) was designed as a PC-based software. This is an indication that subtitling starts to shift to online and cloud-based platforms. As a matter of fact, the integration of MT to online multilingual platforms is gradually becoming a standardised feature. In almost every cloud-based translation platform the option to use an MT engine provider is being offered.

## 4. Using MT for subtitling purposes

In this research, no records of a commercial subtitling system that incorporates automatic translation for translating subtitles could be found. As Lambourne (2015) argues, the development of such state-of-the-art language engines depends heavily on the demands of the market. Nonetheless, such development also depends on academic research. The above projects show that there is potential in machine translation and subtitling with closely related languages but more research is needed.

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5   The former Screen Subtitling System's Business Development Director.

The translation of subtitling files by an MT engine is still possible in the industry since this option is offered not only by the freeware PC-based subtitling software SRT Translator but also in cloud-based translation and localisation platforms like Google Translator Toolkit, Transifex and XTM by using API connections. In addition, translating subtitles with the use of MT is also a feature of traditional desktop-based translation software like MemoQ, SDL Trados Studio, Transit NXT and Wordfast Pro in the form of API connections as well. However, all of the above applications fail to offer subtitle synchronisation or the option to import a multimedia file, except Transit NXT and Transifex. By having to pay a fee for using an MT engine and also pay for buying and maintaining the software, does not make less complicate the work of subtitlers and certainly it does seem to increase their revenues. Not to mention that additional software for the subtitle synchronisation will need to be used. Therefore, the combination of MT and subtitling is not viable for freelance subtitlers. Furthermore, all the above applications use a general domain MT engine which cannot produce adequate results for audiovisual material.

For better MT results, there is the option of using a customised MT engine and import a .srt file. According to Vashee and Gibbs (2010:1) "SMT engine customization is the process of training an engine with domain-specific terminology and data to narrow the range of possible candidate translations used during the translation process." In other words, feeding the MT engine with domain-specific data produces "specific matching patterns" (Vashee & Gibbs, 2010:1) and hence the quality of the translation is raised to its highest potential.

## 5. Other language assistive tools & subtitling

Considering the above, an attempt was made to establish a connection between MT and subtitling as well as the possible benefits that MT can offer to the subtitling process. Similar argumentation will be applied below through the discussion of the role and benefits of other language assistive tools, like translation memories, in subtitling.

Garcia (2009:3) argues that "the Information Revolution did not just generate more work for translators, but also new tools aimed at boosting their productivity." One of these tools is translation memories (TM). According to Macklovitch (2000:1), a translation memory is considered "a particular type of translation support tool that maintains a database of source and target language sentence pairs, and automatically retrieves the translation of those sentences in a new text which occur in the database."

TM tools have been in the industry since the 1990. Hutchins (2003:14) argues that "large-scale translation broadened with the appearance on the market of

translation workstations (or translator workbenches)." Translation memories have been successfully in the market for a long period of time, not only because they are user-friendly tools but also because they are efficient and effective in maintaining terminology and style. Also, they are easily incorporated with other tools like termbases (TB), MT engines, and localisation tools.

Nevertheless, as Smith (2013:1) argues, "traditionally subtitling has fallen outside the scope of translation memory packages, perhaps as it was thought to be too creative a process to benefit from the features such software offers." Since 2013 however, there have been a few projects that used TM tools to optimise subtitling. The work of Hanoulle, Remael and Hoste (2015) is paramount since they studied the efficacy of terminology-extraction systems in documentaries and are now working on the efficacy of translation-memory software in documentaries (Hannoulle, Remael and Hoste, forthcoming). Furthermore, Pérez Rojas (2014) analysed a methodology on how to "automatically create translation memories for subtitling" (ibid:1). As it can be concluded, research has started leaning towards other language assistive tools in subtitling, and has moved away from machine translation engines.

Regarding the subtitling industry, even if no records of commercial subtitling software that incorporates TM or TB tools have been found in this study, the co-existence of subtitling and such tools is still found in various applications. This is possible in the traditional desktop-based translation software like MemoQ, Wordfast Pro, Transit NXT or SDL Trados Studio, in localisation cloud-based platforms like XTM and Transifex and in open-source cloud-based platforms like Google Translation toolkit by simply attaching a TM in the respective applications.

It should be noted that in some of these applications there is the option to import a multimedia file in their video editor while translating, for example, in Transit NXT and in Transifex the subtitler can translate the subtitles while viewing the multimedia file.

## 6.  Future possibilities: the example of OOONA

OOONA is a cloud-based subtitling toolkit that has not been released to the public for commercial use yet. However, it will certainly be a challenge for the traditional subtitling software since it is a cloud-based subtitling toolkit which incorporates TMs, TBs and MT providers while giving the flexibility to its users to perform any necessary quality checks.

As it can be seen below, it incorporates all the features of subtitling software, video import and subtitle synchronisation. Furthermore, the timecodes of the source subtitles are separated from the subtitles on the left-hand side of the source text, not interfering in the translation process. All the necessary quality checks

can be performed by simply selecting the appropriate settings on the homepage, which is similar to the quality assurance process in translation memory software. It also crucial that you can burn and encode the subtitles in videos. A screenshot is provided below.

*Figure 5. OOONA's homepage and editor*
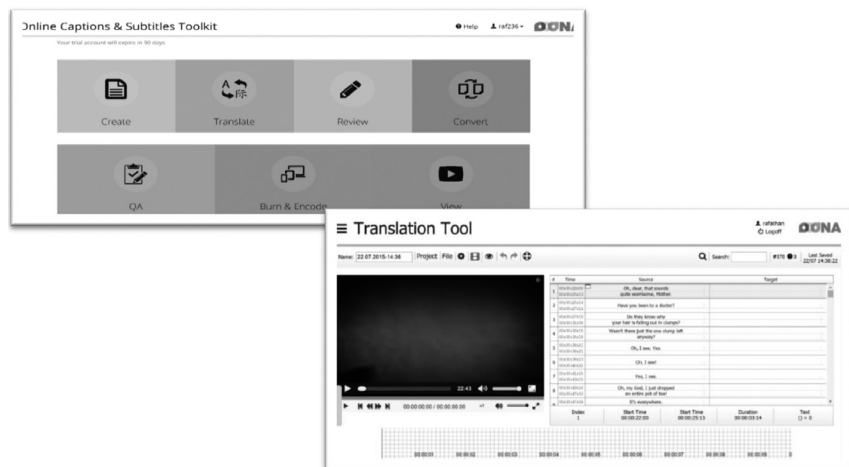


## 7. Methodology

Since a research gap between subtitling and translation tools was identified above, a quantitative study, in the form of an online questionnaire using Google Forms, was conducted in order to answer the questions of whether the integration of such tools is sought by the subtitling industry, what other features could be incorporated in subtitling software and what benefits and problems can arise from the integration of semi- and fully-automated tools. The questionnaire included both types of questions: structured (multiple choice) and unstructured (open-end questions) in order to obtain as robust results as possible.

Furthermore, the questionnaire addressed subtitling companies and freelance subtitlers. The questionnaire was answered by 45[6] respondents who deal or dealt with subtitling professionally or were trained in an official institution that meets the industry's requirements. In the questionnaire the term "subtitling" refers exclusively to offline subtitling and does not include live subtitling.

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6    The questionnaire stopped receiving answers on the 25/08/15.

## 8. Data analysis

### 8.1 Language assistive tools, subtitling and subtitlers

In the questions, *Have you ever considered building/using a subtitling application that will integrate machine translation?* and *Have you ever considered building/using an integrated translation memory in a subtitling software?* the majority (47.7%) of the respondents answered in the former question that they have never considered using such an application whereas in the latter question the majority (41.9%) leaned towards the answer *Yes, I have considered using such application*. This indicates that the idea of using a TM while subtitling is a topic that is being discussed among subtitlers, after all, subtitlers also work as translators in some cases and the majority of translators use TM tools.

Moreover, in the questions that relate to the effectiveness of the above subtitling applications with the different integrations, the subtitling system that would integrate MT received the lowest scores (1–3) from more than half of the respondents (65.9%). This system was rated with the highest values by only 6.8% of the sample. On the other hand, the subtitling system that would integrate a TM component received the medium values (4–7) from the majority (44.2%) but was rated with the highest values by 18.6% of the respondents. As it can be seen, a subtitling system with an integrated TM component inspires more confidence than a system with an MT component. The reason for such preference in the former system, may be due to the fact that TMs are created and built by users themselves or their customers and hence it is more likely that the output of such system will be more acceptable by them.

This is reinforced by the answers given in the question, *Which tool would you prefer to have in a subtitling software? An integrated translation memory (TM) or machine translation (MT)?* in which more than half of the respondents (56.8%) chose TM tools. Interestingly, the answer *Both* received the second highest percentage (20.5%), which shows a tendency of a hybrid approach.

Moreover, regarding the exclusive use of a system that incorporates a TM component, in the question, *What other features would you like to have in the subtitling system that uses a translation memory?* the answer *Source language material (script/template), whenever that is provided beforehand* prevailed with 41.9%, which shows the need of subtitlers to have a system to store and retrieve all the material that is provided by their clients. Termbases were the second choice of the respondents (32.6%). The answer *Corpora (audiovisual)* also received a significant percentage of 20.9%, suggesting that subtitlers need more components

that condense information inside their subtitling software. Their responses seem to lean towards the priorities and background of each subtitler.

Lastly, with respect to the way the billing and quoting is done in subtitling projects, in the questions, *Do you believe that the integration of machine translation in subtitling software will change the way quoting is done in the industry?* and *Do you believe that the integration of translation memory in subtitling software will change the way quoting is done in the industry* the respondents answered *Maybe* in both cases. In the former question, the answer *Maybe* received 55.8%, followed by the answer *Definitely* that received 39.5%. In the latter question, the answer *Maybe* reached a high percentage (64.3%). The second highest answer was also *Definitely* which reached 31.1%. The above results show that the respondents tend to consider the integration of MT as a stronger force that may influence the way the subtitling industry works.

With regards to the question, *What other benefits or issues do you think could come with the integration of machine translation in subtitling software?* there was a variety of answers that were intriguing but the main conclusions were that MT can be useful in terms of reducing the time of the subtitling process but since it has not been developed in an adequate degree yet, it cannot offer quality output that will be useful for subtitlers. In addition, subtitling is already a time-consuming process and hence post-editing the MT output will only add extra hours to the subtitling task. The culture-specific character and space constrains of subtitles were also outlined. Furthermore, the fact that MT engines cannot grasp the context in which subtitles are being produced nor reproduce the tone of a particular character is something that troubles the respondents.

Nonetheless, as one respondent argued "research has shown that SMT is of benefit to subtitlers if MT engines are trained properly". This shows the importance of customisable MT engines in the subtitling realm. In addition, another positive aspect of using MT is accessibility of information for everyone. MT can be used in order to provide the gist of the subtitles for those who cannot afford a paid service.

Last but not least, in the question, *What other benefits or issues do you think could come with the integration of translation memory in subtitling software?* more positive answers were received. To be precise, the consistency that the use of TM tools can offer to subtitlers and the time reduction it implies were emphasised. As it was suggested by one response, consistency between different subtitlers that work on the same series can be achieved through the use of a TM tool. Nevertheless, there was one response in which the replacement of TM tools by TB tools

was recommended. Also, there was an implication that overusing the suggestions from the TM may limit the translator's creativity.

Considering the above, TM tools have been considered as a possible integration in subtitling software by the majority of the respondents and they are preferred when compared to MT engines. In addition, subtitlers seem to lean towards an integration of as much information and as many tools as possible on one screen rather than going back and forth to guidelines and scripts. Also, the integration of TB seems to be considered equally important in subtitling software. Therefore, further research must be carried out on this topic.

## 9.  Areas of dispute

### 9.1  Security of data

Security of data is paramount for clients. One problem that was identified above was that some MT engine providers use source segments that are imported for translation to train their own engines. Wojowski (2014:1) argues that "essentially, in using Google's services, you are agreeing to permit them to store the segment and to use for creating more accurate translations in the future. They can also publish, display, and distribute the content."

Hence, when using, for example, Google Translate in any translation platform or software (for instance, in Wordfast Pro) clients' data, either in the form of written text or multimedia file, are no longer owned by them exclusively; which violates confidentiality agreements and trust between the involved parties. The same happens when using Microsoft Translator or WorldLingo.

In the case of subtitling, it is also crucial to prevent unreleased multimedia files from being published until official release. Therefore, using MT engine providers does not come without consequences. It could be said though that, subtitlers can benefit from MT through MT engines with secure access since such engines do not posit any risk for the publication of confidential data.

### 9.2  Web access

As it has been discussed above, a growing number of applications that allow the translation of .srt files and incorporate TM and/or MT tools, are online platforms. The fact that the only subtitling application that incorporates such language assistive tools in this research (OOONA) is a cloud-based platform and also by taking into consideration the partnerships between subtitling companies (EZTitles) and Google Drive and Dropbox, a tendency in software development towards online, easily accessible platforms can be assumed.

Nevertheless, an issue that arises from this assumption is that Internet connection is not always an option, especially when working on the move. Developing subtitling platforms that do not have PC-based versions may be problematic in its core. For instance, if two subtitlers are working on different episodes of a series and access to the Internet is not possible for one of them, then the delivery of the project will be delayed. If access to the Internet is possible but the connection is slow, then when trying to replay the multimedia file in the video editor to synchronise subtitles, it will not be able to respond properly. Thus, there are many conditions that can influence the execution of a subtitling project when dealing with online platforms. The option that EZTitles provides, using the PC-based software and also having access to cloud-based services, seems the most attractive for subtitlers.

## 9.3   Quoting and billing

Another problematic area that was identified is the way that the possible incorporation of TMs or other language assistive tools in subtitling software will influence the traditional way of quoting. As it is stated in the questionnaire, in a TM software the cost of a translation is based on the number of different segment matching against an already built or given TM. For example, a fuzzy match segment costs more than a 100% match segment but less than a segment that has no match in the translation memory. This is counted by the analysis tools of each software and a per word rate is applied. In subtitling however, pricing is usually based on per minute/subtitle or per word rate. Therefore, the question is whether using subtitling software with a TM tool will change the way the industry values the work of subtitlers and hence affect their revenues.

In the questionnaire, almost one third of the respondents expressed the opinion that the incorporation of TM tools in subtitling software will definitely change the way billing is carried out in the industry. Whether the traditional way of calculating the payment is better than this approach is not certain since no previous research has focused on this topic. However, it could be argued that basing payment on the TM matches is not fair for subtitlers who are called to employ a lot more skills in the process due to time and space limitations subtitling imposes.

## 10.   Conclusions – future research

Taking the above into consideration, three main conclusions can be drawn. First of all, no records of commercial subtitling software that incorporates MT engine could be found. This is logical since the MT engines that have been developed in various projects did not offer significant results that could reduce considerably

the time and effort of the subtitling process, as it was demonstrated by the output of the MT engines of the MUSA and SUMAT project.

The closest to the combination of MT and subtitling in the industry at the moment are the desktop-based software and online platforms that have been mentioned above. These applications have not been designed for subtitling[7], since the features that subtitling software usually provide are not offered or are not offered to an adequate degree, and cannot be considered as alternative solutions to subtitling software since are not financially viable.

Based on the data presented in this study, it has been showed that TM components are also not incorporated in commercial subtitling software. Nonetheless, TMs can be used while translating .srt files in the above mentioned applications that are also offered by various MT engine providers to choose from. Similarly, with MT, these applications cannot fulfil the needs of subtitlers since timecoding cannot be carried out in any of them and the question of profitability remains unanswered.

Concerning the results from the questionnaires, TM components in subtitling software are clearly preferred over all other options. This shows that TM tools are sought by subtitlers and in fact can been seen as important negligence in the development of subtitling software. Although, this is a small-scale research that focuses on presenting what is available in the industry at the moment, this study can be a precursor for future research in examining the different levels of effectiveness and suitability of other language assistive tools in subtitling.

Furthermore, it has been mentioned that the use of TBs can be proven very effective for subtitling. The results of the questionnaire showed that TBs are the second choice of the respondents for incorporation in a subtitling system that uses a TM component. Of course, further research must be carried out in this area.

Last but not least, something that stood out was the existence and plurality of the cloud-based platforms that seem to take over the translation industry nowadays. This is also shown by the fact that subtitling software companies form partnerships with online services/tools like Google Drive and Dropbox. The OOONA toolkit is another example. Furthermore, it is easier to incorporate TM, MT or TB components in online environments since, through this research, has been shown that all the online platforms include at least these components.

We are certainly experiencing a new era in subtitling since the traditional PC-based subtitling software is now transforming into flexible and accessible platforms in order to enhance the subtitling experience as much as possible. It

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7    (except SRT Translator).

is a matter of time to see which tool and platform will overcome the other in the subtitling industry but one thing is for sure – the technologies of the future will bring about a lot of changes in the traditional way of subtitling.

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# Problems of AVT in the 1980s and 1990s

**Abstract:** As its title suggests, the present paper discusses selected problems facing an audiovisual translator in the 1980s and 1990s – the years of the emergence and growth of the video cassette market in Poland. Those problems included: translating a film from the soundtrack only (the translator was given an audio cassette with the soundtrack of a film and commissioned to provide a translation of the dialogue without watching the film); translating a film from the soundtrack after watching the film – somewhat easier than the previous process, but still tricky (for example, what does a translator do when he cannot understand a line after listening to it for the umpteenth time?); translating a film from the transcript provided by the producers / owners of the copyright, but without seeing the film (what does a translator do when he realizes that in some places the transcript does not make sense?); and finally – translating a film the way it should normally be done: from the transcript, after seeing the film, and being able to refer to it at any moment. The article is written mostly from a personal perspective, but it deals with AVT problems of a general nature, and it must be added that it is not restricted to the problems facing a translator for the video cassette market (some of the examples discussed by the author come from films shown on television or in cinemas). The paper also mentions such aspects of AVT as cooperation with dialogue editors, the status of the AV translator in that period, and – last but not least – the financial aspects of the profession.

## 0. Introduction

In the early 1970s I decided to write a history of popular cinema. The book never really went beyond the planning stage, but I did write a rough draft of the Introduction, which began:

> "A book lover is in a better position than a movie buff, because, with a little bit of effort and good luck, he can have all his favourite books at home to look at, to browse through, to read and re-read – in short to cherish, whereas a movie buff can only collect film magazines and books about the movies, and has to rely on TV to rerun his favourite films."

In the early 1980s that text did not make sense any more: it had become possible to collect films as well. The revolution was brought about by the Video Cassette Recorder. Actually, as I learned much later, the VCR was invented in 1956, and

the first home video recorders appeared in 1965; they started to become mass-produced in 1975, but did not gain wider popularity until the 1980s.[1]

In Poland, the arrival of the VCR was somewhat delayed, mostly for financial reasons: the first VCRs, sold in Pewex or Baltona shops, cost between 800 and 1000 US dollars (figures for 1981[2]); by 1985, their prices had dropped to around 500 dollars, but this was still beyond the reach of an average Kowalski (Fortuna 2013: 28). Still, some people – and some institutions – were able to afford them. In the early 1980s, it was common practice in Poland for various clubs or centres of culture to use a VCR to organize public screenings of films which the Polish censorship deemed ideologically inappropriate (James Bond films, erotic or pornographic films, etc.) or which were simply too expensive for the country to buy for official distribution in cinemas (needless to say, such activities were semi-legal or downright illegal – as was most of the video market in Poland).

The growing popularity of the VCR entailed the birth of various (often clandestine) video rental shops and plain video shops, where customers could simply buy a copy of the film they wanted. The arrival of the VCR in Poland coincided with the beginnings of satellite television. VCR owners who had access to satellite TV would tape films, mostly from English or German satellite channels, and, unless they were proficient in the given foreign language, would then want those films translated into Polish. To satisfy this demand, there emerged numerous film translation agencies which offered such services (recording a voice-over onto the original soundtrack).[3] All of this entailed a seriously increased demand for audiovisual translators. And thus, around 1980, I, a university lecturer without any preparation or experience in AV translation, became a freelance AV translator.

Actually, I started as an AV interpreter. In the late 1970s and the early 1980s, the Łódź Film School organized weekly screenings of significant films outside regular cinema distribution for their students and staff (this had nothing to do with VCRs – the School used traditional movie projectors and reels of film). To make the films accessible to people who did not speak the language, they employed someone who provided live interpreting. If the main showing was scheduled for six o'clock in the evening, this person would come to the School and watch the film at four, and then

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1   https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Videocassette_recorder [accessed 08.08.2016]; see also Castonguay (2006).

2   If I remember correctly, my monthly salary, converted to US dollars, was then about 20.

3   Interestingly enough, having a voice-over recorded onto the video cassette was cheaper if one recorded the films with commercial breaks; if one wanted the film without breaks, one had to pay extra – apparently, the master tapes used by the agencies had all the commercial breaks on them.

would sit there with earphones on and translate the film into a microphone, more or less like in simultaneous interpreting. One day I was recommended for this by a colleague from the Institute of English Studies who had done some work for them. If I remember correctly, my first film was the fourth James Bond movie "Thunderball" (1965). I do not think I did a very good job with that, but I cannot have been too bad, because they asked me again and again, and soon I became their regular interpreter.

In most cases I would be told a few days in advance what film I would have to translate, and then I would try to prepare myself. I had quite a few books on the history of the cinema on my bookshelves and I subscribed to two film magazines, so I would try to read as much as possible about the given film. Almost everything helped: the names of the protagonists, place names, plot summary or details of the plot – all of these made the processing of aural information easier. Naturally, some films were relatively simple, with limited dialogue, spoken in slow, clear, educated English, and some were much harder, with fast dialogues in colloquial English, or with some characters occasionally mumbling and muttering.

The hardest film for me to translate in this manner (or rather to interpret) was probably "MASH" (1970), directed by Robert Altman and starring Donald Sutherland and Elliott Gould. Not only was the film extremely difficult in itself, but also it was such a legendary classic and so many people wanted to see it that the School cancelled the private screening for me and asked me to translate both showings. I still remember the horror which I experienced when I saw – and heard, with the stress on *heard* – the beginning of the film, with several characters talking at the same time (I had not seen the film before; I only knew vaguely what it was about). I sat there, panic-stricken, listening to the babble of voices, trying to catch all the lines and thinking hard about which line to interpret and how to do it without losing the next one, and of course by the time I made some sort of decision, the scene was over and I had not spoken a word. But I pulled myself together, and the rest of the film did have a voice-over of sorts. The second showing went somewhat better, but I still thought that my poor performance meant the end of my career as an interpreter at the Film School, but no, they were magnanimous and forgiving, and I continued to work for them.

In the meantime I was approached by the owner of a film translation agency / studio, who asked me whether I would be willing to work for him as an AV translator. I would not have to worry about the end product, I would be responsible only for translating the film more or less literally. My translation would then be given to a dialogue editor, who would adapt it to conform to the rules of voice-over production (which, at that time, I knew virtually nothing about), and then someone else (a *lektor*) would record the voice-over. I decided that it would be

a good opportunity to see some new films, and I accepted his proposition (later, as my "reputation" grew, I worked for other film translation studios as well, but with roughly the same arrangement). Most of the films I translated appeared on video cassettes, a few were shown on TV, and two or three times I was involved in dubbing and subtitling films for the cinema.

## 1. Translating from the soundtrack without having seen the film

The beginnings were difficult. As I stated above, video cassette recorders were relatively expensive and I did not yet have one. Moreover, initially I was supposed to work from the soundtrack, and that involved stopping the tape after every line of dialogue and, very frequently, also rewinding it (sometimes many times) if I did not get a word or a line. Unfortunately, stopping, rewinding and playing a videotape is extremely cumbersome (when we press "Stop", the head is withdrawn and stops reading, but the tape takes a moment to stop; when we press "Play", the tape starts moving forward again before the head touches it and starts reading, so that we are a few seconds further than we were when we stopped, so that we have to rewind the tape a bit even when we think that we do not need to rewind it, etc.). Consequently, the head of the studio suggested the following *modus operandi*: I would watch the film on the premises, I would be given the soundtrack on audio cassettes (easy to stop and to rewind), I would then provide a translation, and finally I would watch the film again, to check for possible mistakes. Sounds fine, except that occasionally it was impossible to arrange a screening of the film before I was expected to translate it, and then I had to work from the soundtrack only, without having seen the film.

If this sounds difficult, it is. Basically, it violates all the principles of AVT. As is known, films are based on four channels: the verbal auditory channel (dialogue and occasionally songs), the non-verbal auditory channel (sound effects and music), the verbal visual channel (texts which appear on the screen), and the non-verbal visual channel, i.e., the moving images which make up the given film (Gottlieb 1998: 245, Bogucki 2004, Szarkowska 2008: 11, Wróblewski 2015a: 71). The meaning of a movie results from the interplay of these four channels, and, consequently, basing the translation of a film on the auditory channels only makes very little sense.

One of the films that I had to deal with in this way was "Performance" (1970), directed by Donald Cammell and Nicolas Roeg and starring James Fox and Mick Jagger. The beginning was relatively straightforward, with clear, unambiguous dialogue, so that the translating went smoothly, until at one point I heard what sounded like: "Business is business and progress is progress obsolete." I stopped: what did the last word mean in this context and what was its syntactic function?

Obviously, there was no way for me to solve this puzzle without seeing the film. I had a deadline to meet, so I had to continue working, leaving this word to be translated later, but it was a very uncomfortable situation, having that unsolved problem at the back of my mind. When I finally saw the film, it turned out that, although the last word sounded as if it were part of the same line, in reality it was not: the scene with the speech about business and progress is cut to one showing some gangsters demolishing an office. One of the gangsters lifts a typewriter off a desk and throws it on the floor, uttering the word "Obsolete!"

Another film which I was commissioned to translate without having seen first was "Body Heat" (1981), directed by Lawrence Kasdan and starring William Hurt and Kathleen Turner. I started the audiotape and heard a female voice saying: "Still burning?" and a man's affirmative grunt. It was obvious that I had a serious problem here, because there was no subject here, and the word *burn* is fairly ambiguous. What did the verb *to burn* refer to: to a fire burning somewhere, to the man's burning with desire, to something else? What did the question mean? I had no idea and could not guess.

Of course, I could have moved on, leaving this first line untranslated, to return to it later, but this time I said "No!" I phoned the owner of the film translation agency and I told him that I could not translate this film without seeing it. I explained the problem to him, quoting the specific line; he knew English, so he appreciated my predicament, and we managed to arrange a screening for me. Once the visual channel was made available to me, the meaning of the line became clear (the scene depicts William Hurt standing at a window and looking at the burning remnants of a building) and the process of translating much simpler. Frustrated by the whole experience, I established Rule # 1: "Do not ever translate a film which you have not seen!" From then on, I always abided by this rule.

I believe that this rule should be followed universally, but evidently it is not. There is a scene in the film "Moon Over Parador" (1988, directed by Paul Mazursky), in which a butler brings the protagonist (played by Richard Dreyfuss) a glass of whisky on a tray, and utters the words: "Your nightcap, Sir!", meaning obviously "a drink, sometimes an alcoholic drink, that someone has just before going to bed" (*CALD* 2003). Yet when I saw this film on TV, the Polish voice-over was: "Pańska szlafmyca!", referring obviously to the more traditional meaning of the word *nightcap*, i.e. "a type of hat made from soft cloth and worn in bed, especially in the past" (*CALD* 2003), which, to me, suggests that the translator did not see the film.

Of course, theoretically, a different explanation is also possible: the translator may not have known the word *nightcap*, he or she checked it in a dictionary, found the equivalent *szlafmyca*, and used it, not knowing and not bothering to

find out what *szlafmyca* is (the word comes from German *Schlafmütze* and is, it has to be admitted, somewhat archaic, as the object itself). In other words, perhaps the translator thought that the word *szlafmyca* referred to a glass of whisky, but I have to admit that this explanation is not very likely. On the other hand, I am somewhat surprised by the behaviour of the voice-over reader, i.e. of the *lektor*. On the few occasions that I was involved in the actual reading or recording of a voice-over, I always looked at the screen while reading my lines; here the *lektor* probably did not.

One more example which suggests that my Rule # 1 is sometimes violated comes from the film "The Sting" (1973, directed by George Roy Hill). At one point in the film a con man pretending to be an FBI agent named Polk tells one of his subordinates: "Get this off to the Department right away." When this movie was shown on TV, the translation ran: "Zawieź to do centrali." Close enough? Close enough, except that what happens next is this: the man says "Yes, sir!", sits down at a desk and begins to radio or to telegraph the message, which is of course covered by the word *get*, but not by the Polish verb *zawieź*, which means more like "Take it there" and involves specifically driving or riding to a place. The mistake was repeated in the DVD version, where the line appeared as "Zawieź to do Wydziału!"

Another example which might suggest a violation of the rule about not translating a film which one has not seen comes from the film "Olsen-banden ser rødt" (1976; English: "The Olsen Gang Sees Red", Polish: "Gang Olsena wpada w szał"). I was watching the film in the cinema, and at one point I burst out laughing only to realize that I was the only viewer to do so – I had read the family motto over the entrance to Baron Løwenvold's castle, which read "Honi soit qui pense", and which was left untranslated into Polish, i.e. unsubtitled. This means roughly "Shame on him who thinks", and is, I believe, sufficiently amusing in itself, but of course my amusement was far greater, for I recognized it immediately as a corruption of the motto of the Order of the Garter, which is "Honi soit qui mal y pense", and which means "Shame on him who thinks evil of this". Admittedly, the subtitler would not have been able to provide a full explanation of the genesis of the Baron's family motto, but it seems to me that even a simple translation would have generated some laughter. Of course, here, the reason why the translator did not refer to the verbal visual channel may not have been connected with the fact that he or she never saw the film. The film is Danish, so presumably it was translated from that language; the motto, on the other hand, is Anglo-Norman, and hence the translator and the subtitler may not have realized its significance and its hilariousness.

## 2. Translating from the soundtrack after having seen the film

Once I told the studio that I would not work unless they showed me the film first, one of my problems disappeared, but my situation was still far from comfortable. While it is certainly more reasonable to translate a film from the soundtrack after one has seen it, it is still by no means an easy task. Every learner of English (and of course of other foreign languages) knows how difficult it is sometimes to decipher what a speaker has said, especially if he or she mumbles, uses dialectal or non-standard forms or speaks against a lot of loud background noise. One of the films which I had to translate from the soundtrack was "Dog Soldiers" (aka "Who'll Stop the Rain", 1978, directed by Karel Reisz and starring Nick Nolte, Tuesday Weld, and Michael Moriarty). In one scene, one of the characters is walking along train rails and at one point he mumbles something incomprehensible under his breath. I remember working on this scene, sitting with my earphones on and straining my ears, rewinding the tape dozens of times, trying to hear that one phrase and failing. I mentioned the problem to the owner of the studio and we watched the scene together a few times, trying not only to listen but also to lip-read – all to no avail. Fortunately, one of my colleagues was an American and he agreed to help me. He watched the film and understood the line in question without any problems – it was: "Semper Fi!" (short for "Semper Fidelis", a Latin phrase meaning "Always faithful", the motto of the United States Marine Corps). This "adventure" made me establish Rule # 2: "When you work from the soundtrack, always try to obtain the cooperation of a native speaker."

Obviously, the key word in Rule # 2 was *try*. Quite simply, it was not always possible to arrange that. Either I had a very tight deadline and had to opt for speed rather than quality, or no native speakers were available at the given time (especially during summer holidays) and then I was stuck. I had such an experience with translating the film "Monty Python's The Meaning of Life" (1983). One of the scenes presents a sex education class. The Headmaster illustrates the topic by having sex with his wife, the pupils are all bored to death, at one point the Headmaster notices Carter playing with something. He calls out: "Carter!" Carter reacts: "Yes, sir." The Headmaster asks: "What is it?" Carter replies "It's ___[?]___, sir." The Headmaster demands: "Bring it up here."

I do not remember how many times I listened to the scene, trying to understand Carter's reply – in vain. Unfortunately, this was summer vacation and my native speaker colleagues were all in Britain and the US, so I could not ask for their help. Again, I explained the problem to the owner of the studio. We watched the scene together several times, not so much listening as rather trying to see the object in question – nothing doing. It was too small, too far away, and practically

hidden in Carter's hands. I could not think of a solution to our problem. The head of the studio was more practical and more creative. He asked himself what schoolboys like that might be playing with during a lesson they were not interested in and "translated" the line as "To proca" ("It's a slingshot").

The story has a second ending. A few years later I was in a bookshop in London and I saw the book of the film "Monty Python's The Meaning of Life", and there, to my distress, I saw that the object which Carter was playing with during the sex education class was … Let me quote from the book of the film:

> **Headmaster** What is it?
> **Carter** It's an ocarina … sir.
> (Monty Python 1991; the book has no page numbers)

Oddly enough, when I saw the film afterwards, I heard that unfortunate line clearly without any problems; such is the power of the written word.

As time went by, the situation began to improve: more and more often film translation agencies or studios began to provide transcripts of the film obtained from the producers or owners of the copyright. Unfortunately, the agencies (or, more specifically, their owners) assumed – mistakenly, and in some cases, as it turned out, dramatically mistakenly – that this eliminated the necessity to show the film to the translator.

## 3. Translating a film from the transcript provided by the producers, but without seeing the film

The transcripts I worked from were basically of two types – some were like screenplays, with a full description of the action plus the lines spoken by the characters, and some gave just the words, with no hint whatsoever of what was happening on the screen. Working with transcripts was naturally more convenient (logistically simpler – no more struggling with the tape recorder – and definitely easier – no more straining one's ears trying to understand what a character is saying) than translating a film from the soundtrack, but a transcript is not a film, and perusing a transcript cannot be considered equivalent to watching the film. Seeing the characters' lines on paper, I still needed to know how the actors delivered them: how fast, how slowly, whether the lines were foregrounded or uttered more casually (perhaps they were even more like background noise). Even the fuller screenplay-like transcripts, with some extra comments on what the characters were doing when they said the things they said, seldom gave such details as what I might term the density of the dialogue, i.e., whether the various characters' lines were

spoken separately or sort of blended together; nor did they mention all the visual elements which the translator might find useful and highly significant, if not vital.

Another problem was that occasionally there were discrepancies between the transcript and the actual film – once I translated a film strictly from a transcript, then they let me see the film to check for possible omissions and mistakes, and then, to my surprise and horror, I discovered that, while most scenes of the film corresponded to the transcript, there were also numerous differences between the text and the film. Probably, the transcript was an earlier draft of the film, something like a working script, and the finished film was in places simply different from the planned version.

And sometimes the transcript simply did not make sense. I was once working on an animated cartoon (I think that the film was to be dubbed), and at one point in the film the characters were singing a song. I had established with the studio boss that they did not want me to turn the song into a song, that they had a song-lyrics-writer for this, all they wanted from me was a more or less literal translation of the lyrics. I reached the page with the song and read:

> "Oh, we don't care a lady gets,
> We never go to bed"

Whatever the lady gets or got, this simply did not make sense and there was no point in struggling with this fragment. I phoned the studio boss and said that it was absolutely necessary that I should view the film and check the transcript. He agreed, arranged a screening for me, and in the film I heard quite clearly:

> "Oh, we don't care how late it gets,
> We never go to bed"[4]

Consequently, I established Rule # 3: "Do not ever trust film transcripts which you have not checked against the soundtrack."

Incidentally, the rule is valid also for other kinds of transcripts, including lyrics of songs. When I was a student, one of our American teachers decided to teach us the song "Okie from Muskogee" by Merle Haggard, and brought us the lyrics typed and mimeographed by herself. The song ends with the words "In Muskogee, Oklahoma, USA", which we all heard very clearly, and yet in the text that the teacher brought to class, the last line read: "In Muskogee, the home of the USA" and, as the subsequent discussion revealed, it was not a trap designed to test our listening comprehension skills – the teacher had simply misheard that line.

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4    Unfortunately, I do not remember what film this was. I tried to Google the quotation (in both forms: corrupted and correct), but the search did not return any results.

## 4. Miscellaneous problems

Generally, when I had a transcript and when I had seen the film, most of my "special" problems disappeared (by "special" I mean problems connected with the then imperfect *modi operandi* of AV translators). Of course, there remained standard translational problems at the level of comprehension or transfer, but they were not unsolvable. Once or twice I may have encountered a word which was not to be found in any dictionary (that was in pre-Internet and pre-Google days), but I do not remember any of such cases now. The only word that I remember that I could not find anywhere was *mahaska* from the film "Hoodwinked", aka "Jake Spanner, Private Eye" (1989, directed by Lee H. Katzin and starring Robert Mitchum), but that was actually not from a transcript – that movie I translated from the soundtrack. The word in question appeared in the following scene: the main character got hit on the head and his friend, who had witnessed the incident, reported afterwards: "I saw this big mahaska coming at you, and I yelled, and then he sapped you". None of the dictionaries available to me at that time had this word, so I had to guess its meaning strictly from the context and I translated *mahaska* simply as if it were *guy* (the full story is told in Wróblewski 2015b: 261).

The few "special" problems that remained were of a more practical nature; they involved the cooperation with the dialogue editor, they were related to the status of the AV translator as opposed to, for example, that of the dialogue editor, and, last but not least, they were connected with money: they concerned the financial aspects of the profession.

Speaking about cooperation with dialogue editors, on the whole it went fairly smoothly, and I appreciated their contribution (especially that in the 1980s I did not not have access to such books as Belczyk 2007, Tomaszkiewicz 2008, or Adamowicz-Grzyb 2013, which I have now, and which have taught me some rules of AV translation). Not only did my editors polish my translations, but they also saved me from a few blunders. For example, in one scene of the already mentioned movie "Hoodwinked", the protagonist addressed himself as "You old dick!". I was fully aware that this word means both "a detective" and "a penis", but, since the protagonist was a private detective, I chose the first option and rendered that line as "Ech, ty stary detektywie!". The editor, however, changed it to "Ty stary fiucie!", and, on second thoughts, I agreed with her. On the other hand, when in the film "The Party" (1968, directed by Blake Edwards) the dialogue editor changed my line "Jeden z tych kelnerów nie lubi tego drugiego." into "Ci kelnerzy się nie lubią", I was annoyed. The point is that in this scene Peter Sellers notices a waiter strangling another waiter and observes stoically: "I think one of these bearers does not like the other one.", which I thought was hilarious, while the Polish line was

bland. I was all the more angry, because the editor had not consulted me about the changes, and this was one of the few films in which I was actually named as the translator (after a lengthy struggle).

Which leads us to the next problem: I am not desperate to be famous, but when I translate things, I like my translations to be signed with my name. For some strange reason, film translation agencies regarded that as weird. I translated a film, but the message read at the end of the voice-over listed only the name of the dialogue editor. When the translation was for a video cassette, especially of a movie videotaped by a VCR owner himself, I did not bother, but when my films were to be shown on TV, I started to demand recognition, and a few times I succeeded – a few times the films ended with the message: "The Polish dialogue was prepared by Mrs. So-and-so [the dialogue editor] on the basis of a translation by Janusz Wróblewski". Several times I heard a similarly expanded closing line of the voice-over with names of other translators, so obviously sometimes other AV translators fought for recognition too, but probably with equally limited success. I thought it unfair that the name of somebody who did not speak the language was more important than the name of the real translator, but apparently not many people thought so too.

One more thing that was definitely unfair (it still is, to my knowledge) was the remuneration system. It is not that AV translators were underpaid (although they were, like almost all translators in Poland were and are!) – I could have earned approximately five times as much per hour giving private lessons – it is that AV translators got paid per 10 minutes of film, regardless of how much dialogue or text they had to translate (to my knowledge that system has not changed). I remember specifically one occasion when I delivered my translation of the film "Gothic" (1986, directed by Ken Russell) and somebody else brought his translation of a shoot-'em-up. My film told the (somewhat fictionalized) story of the Shelleys' visit to Lord Byron's Villa Diodati; during one stormy night the characters tell ghost and horror stories, and proclaim a competition to write a horror story; as a result, Mary Shelley wrote *Frankenstein* and John Polidori *The Vampyre*. The movie was packed with dialogues, monologues, short-story telling and reading, etc., and lasted 87 minutes. My translation took 52 pages of dense typescript and I got paid 450 PLN. The other person's translation was 8 pages of double-spaced short lines, but the film lasted 120 minutes, and he got paid 600 PLN.

I tried to reason with the owners of film translation agencies, but they were relentless. They argued that we got all sorts of films to translate, some shorter, some longer, some with limited dialogue, some with a lot of dialogue, that in the long run it was all in a sense equalized. I did not see it this way. I was under the impression that my films were all of the exceedingly wordy type, and one of the commissioners

admitted that openly: "Look, what do you expect? You are an erudite, you are the philologist. You spot allusions, you recognize quotations. You are just too good to be wasted on dumb action films." So I continued translating "literary" films, dreaming of getting an action film with characters delivering blows rather than speeches and knowing that I would never get one. And after some time I decided that I did not want to translate films any more.

The last film I started translating was "A Bunny's Tale" (1985, directed by Karen Arthur and starring Kirstie Alley as Gloria Steinem). Perhaps it is not a bad film, but it is extremely wordy, and after I typed about five pages of what at that time (the early 1990s) I regarded as unbearably boring dialogue, I phoned the commissioner and told him that I would not do it. As I said, one of the major reasons for my quitting was the above mentioned financial dissatisfaction: I felt exploited and I did not like that state. I gave him the five pages for free and we parted amiably. He later tried to tempt me into returning to AV translation by suggesting that I should translate "Monty Python's Flying Circus" (he lent me the transcripts to browse through for a few days). This was much more interesting and challenging than "A Bunny's Tale" and I was actually tempted to try my hand at some of the wordplay which the text abounded in. For example, I considered what I could do with the following set of subtitles superimposed on a film of Hitler speaking (from Show One: Whither Canada?):

> "MY DOG'S GOT NO NOSE"
> "HOW DOES HE SMELL?"
> "AWFUL"
> (Monty Python 1992, Vol. One, p. 12)

After some pondering, I came up with the following solution:

> "MÓJ PIES NIE MA NOSA"
> "I JAK TO ZNOSI?"
> "ZNOŚNIE"

As I said, this was challenging and tempting, but the financial arrangements were not satisfactory. Translating wordplay is fun, but it is also hard work, and hard work deserves solid pay, which I would not get, so I declined the offer. Frankly speaking, I was also worried about deadlines, because it is not always easy to come up with a rendering of a pun (if I remember correctly, the version shown on TV did not have any pun here – the translation did not refer to the double meaning of the verb *smell*, and ran simply: "Mój pies nie ma nosa." / "Jak śmierdzi?" / "Okropnie." – so that some more observant viewers might have wondered why this exchange was referred to as a joke by the narrator of the show).

Generally, a lot of puns and jokes were mistranslated on TV, as was a lot of plain dialogue. Some of the mistakes were so idiotic that I could not believe my ears when I heard them. One of the worst-translated films that I have ever seen was "The Babysitter" (1995, directed by Guy Ferland and starring Alicia Silverstone). We get some idea of the level of translation already in the scene when the babysitter arrives and the lady of the house instructs her, pointing to her older son: "See that he eats his steak", which the translator rendered as "Widzisz, jak je swój stek?" (back-translated: "See how he eats / he is eating his steak?" or "See him eating …?") instead of "Dopilnuj, żeby zjadł swój stek", but the climax of the evening comes later, during the party: a visibly pregnant woman is sitting on a sofa, a friend sits down next to her, pats her belly delicately and says: "Any day now?" And the Polish voice-over is: "Teraz już zawsze tak będzie?" (literally: "It's going to be always like this now?"). Really? I mean, even if the translator was not shown the film (which he or she probably was not), "Any day now?" can never mean "It's going to be always like this now".

And I remember my disbelief and shock when I heard a "translation" of the following joke from an episode of "The Benny Hill Show":

Question: "What is written on the bottom of Irish beer bottles?"
Answer: "Open other end!"

The version shown on Polsat years ago had: "Co znajduje się na dnie butelki irlandzkiego piwa?" "Dziura" ("A hole"). "Why?" I asked myself. This is not difficult, not any wordplay, this is plain and simple language. Well, quite simply, in the 1980s and 1990s a lot of AV translation was done by uneducated hacks who should never have been allowed near a film translation studio, let alone inside one.

One last point: Sometimes when I tell the story of my "adventures" in AV translation, I get asked whether I ever saw other versions of "my" movies, i.e. "my" films translated by other people, and what I thought of them. The answer to the first question is simple – yes. The answer to the second question is a bit more complicated, because when I watched those films later on TV, I did not remember my own translations line after line. Some versions were probably comparable with mine, some might have been better than mine (especially if they were prepared from a transcript, when I had worked only from the soundtrack). Not surprisingly, what I mostly remember are films which contained stupid mistakes in places which I had translated correctly.

One of such films was Woody Allen's comedy "Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex * But Were Afraid to Ask" (1972). While most of the film as shown on TV was all right and in places possibly even better than my version, there was one detail which I thought was a blunder on the part of the new translator.

In the "Sheep" episode ("What Is Sodomy?"), Dr Ross falls in love with a sheep, and when they are separated, when the sheep is taken away from him, he is seen drinking Woolite, i.e. a brand of liquid detergent for washing wool, and I gave that as "Płyn do prania wełny", but the voice-over on Polish TV said "Owcze mleko" ("Sheep milk"), which I thought half-killed the joke by depriving it of its absurdity.

And I remember the TV premiere of the film "The Day After" (1983, directed by Nicholas Meyer and starring Jason Robards, JoBeth Williams, and Steve Guttenberg) during martial law. I had translated it for video cassettes, so I knew it, but it was not a bad film and I decided to watch it again. At one point in the film a character offers an orange to a young man, commenting that it might be "the last one you can have" (at least this is what I heard there). But the Polish *lektor* read: "To może być ostatnia pomarańcza przez następne półtora tygodnia". Back-translated, this is "This might be the last orange for the next week and a half". I was shocked, but I immediately realized that the translator must have been working from the soundtrack and must have misheard the phrase "the last one you can have" as "the last week and a half" and then somehow confused the words *last* and *next*. The punchline came later: after the showing, the TV organized a discussion about the film: concerned viewers expressed their views about American imperialism, the threat of a nuclear war, etc. (this was all part of Polish communist anti-American propaganda), and at one point a self-righteous young man commented disgustedly: "This film is so American … For an American it's a tragedy not to have an orange for a week and a half". And then I thought "Oh, boy, they should have used my version". Maybe it was not perfect, but at least it was not so ideologically corrupted.

And this is, I think, a fitting conclusion to this narrative of my experience of AVT in the 1980s and 1990s: maybe I was not a perfect AV translator, certainly I was not the best, but I did my job as best I could and I do not think I was the worst AV translator of those years. And I may have invented the Polish title of "Blade Runner" – "Łowca androidów" (the 1982 film directed by Ridley Scott and starring Harrison Ford, Rutger Hauer, and Sean Young). I certainly translated this film and I certainly gave it this title, and I later saw it on TV and I have it on DVD in somebody else's translations, but under the same Polish title, which I think was invented by me.

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# Polish audience preferences regarding audiovisual translation: a reception study

**Abstract:** The contribution discusses a questionnaire-based study conducted among Polish audiences to identify patterns in the reception of AVT. The major modes of AVT are examined through the prism of parameters that could be shaping viewer experience and preferences.

## 1. By way of an introduction

As more and more audiovisual content is made available in multiple language versions and technology develops at breakneck pace, audiovisual translation (AVT) as a research area has progressed from niche through dynamic to fully mature. The very term "audiovisual" highlights the prime feature of this type of translation, that is the coexistence of image and sound as semiotic channels of an audiovisual text. For the sake of the present discussion, let us assume that audiovisual translation is understood as producing different language versions of audiovisual texts, including feature films, documentaries, animated movies, commercials, series, sitcoms, as well as any products which transmit information simultaneously via image and sound. The multiple language versions can be added as text (open and closed subtitling relayed in the cinema, on television, on hard copies such as BluRay or DVD, streamed online, or displayed in operas and theatres – so-called surtitling) or as a separate audio track (dubbing, voice-over, commentary, narration). AVT is closely related to media accessibility, understood as making audiovisual content available to viewers with sensory disabilities, in particular the visually impaired and the hearing impaired. Media accessibility very rarely implies language transfer, as it is typically intralingual, thus the shift is of a semiotic rather than linguistic nature. Whatever information the impaired viewer has no access to, is transmitted via the channel that is available to them. Thus the visually impaired will use the full potential of the audio channel and a verbal description of the visual information is made

available for them to listen to; conversely, the hearing impaired will have the audio track relayed to them visually in the form of intralingual subtitles.

Even such a simplified definition paints the picture of a very complex mode of translation. No manageable definition, however, could possibly accommodate such diverse activities as respeaking (live subtitling), audio-description for theatres, museums, and sports events, sign language interpreting or game localisation of audiovisual content. The audiovisual text type is also a factor. The four semiotic channels that make up an audiovisual message (dialogue, soundtrack, picture, and text on screen) are not necessarily equally important; in certain audiovisual materials the picture conveys the most information, in others it is secondary, while the dialogue takes precedence. There are at least five types of relations between image and sound (cf. Tomaszkiewicz 2006 and Bogucki 2015). A sitcom, a political thriller, a cartoon, a promotional clip, a lighthearted commercial, and a head of state address on TV are dramatically different audiovisual texts, united only by the coexistence of the visual and the verbal in information transfer; according to skopos theory (Reiss and Vermeer 1984) it is the aim of the source (and target) text that determines the translation process. Age-old translation problems like cultural/linguistic untranslatability or lack of equivalence can be tackled in one way in a subtitled material and in quite a different way in a dubbed one, both ways possibly different from another one that would be used in a monosemiotic written text. The technical constraints on dubbing and subtitling may have a similar rationale, but they differ in nature and application, thus the decision-making process is not necessarily comparable; the additive nature of subtitling means that captions should be unobtrusively simple and lucid, whereas dubbing strives for a semblance of naturalness and a pretence of the original.

## 2. Polish audience preferences

Poland is a perfect milieu for an audiovisual translation researcher, in particular one conducting reception studies. Between 1945 and 1989 it was a dubbing country; Polish dubbing of that period was highly professional, albeit limited only to those films which were deemed suitable for viewing by the socialist censorship system. Currently the dominant mode of audiovisual transfer seems to be subtitling, whose technical and linguistic quality is on constant increase. After 1989 Polish studios continued to dub films, but in terms of target audience and translation strategy the current dubbing is quite unlike the postwar one; it is now the preserve of animated productions and as such makes heavy use of adaptation and domestication (cf. Sikora 2013). However, the Polish AVT specialty remains voice-over, whereby a single male voice talent reads out all

dialogue. Audio-description may be almost absent from cinemas, but it does figure abundantly on DVDs/BluRays and on TV, as well as during sports events (the 2012 European football championships in Poland and Ukraine deserve credit for starting the trend). Opera surtitling is no longer exotic in Poland. Digital television affords countless possibilities for every viewer, including the blind and the deaf, as per EU and local regulations. A sign language interpreter, common on pre-digital television, is no longer the only choice available to hearing-impaired audiences. As far as AVT research in academia is concerned, Poland is shortlisted as a European leader[1].

As the trinity of AVT modalities (subtitling, dubbing, and voice-over) commonly used in Poland is diverse, audience preferences are fairly specific. Poland is thus the optimal place to conduct a reception study, as audiences are familiar with all the three main modes of AVT and usually have firm predilections toward one of them. Some audiences are not in a position to choose certain types of AVT, though; for instance, very young children and senior viewers will not opt for subtitling, the former due to illiteracy, the latter due to failing eyesight and slow reading speeds. Sometimes the choice of an AVT modality is conditioned by more objective factors, such as tradition and low cost in the case of voice-over on Polish television. Incidentally, the preponderance of voice-over in Poland has met with social unrest; journalist Jacek Rakowiecki protested against the policy of big studios requiring the use of voice-over on television.[2] A few years ago, the daily *Dziennik* led a public campaign against voice-over involving a few actors and the minister of education[3]. In the 20th century, Poland had little choice, but the change of the political system, subsequent global expansion and the launch of digital TV all mean that voice-over is becoming if not history, then at least no longer the only option. The Polish voice-over has been widely discussed on the internet and in the press, for instance gazeta.pl[4].

A Canal Plus poll (Bogucki 2004) places voice-over as the most popular mode of AVT in Poland in the late 20th century, favoured by 50.2% respondents.

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1   Both authors of the present paper are founding members of the Intermedia AVT research group, whose advisory board is made up of eminent scholars from all over the world.

2   http://naekranie.pl/aktualnosci/lektor-przymusem-w-telewizji-polskiej, accessed 07. 03. 2016.

3   http://wiadomosci.dziennik.pl/wydarzenia/artykuly/78732,lektorzy-znikna-z-polskiej-telewizji.html, accessed 07. 03. 2016.

4   http://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl/wiadomosci/1,151424,19854808,filmy-z-lektorem-znamy.html, accessed 02. 04. 2016.

According to a more recent survey (Garcarz 2007), voice-over and dubbing are equally popular (approximately 45% each). Kizeweter (2015) presents the results of an online reception study; however, it appears to be methodologically flawed. The respondents opted mostly for subtitling, but the result is predictable because of the target group; the respondents' preferred method of access to audiovisual material was streaming, which tends to be subtitled most of the time, hence the bias toward this AVT modality. Moreover, the group of respondents was arguably too small to be representative.

On balance, reception studies of audiovisual translation modalities involving Polish audiences are at worst anecdotal and subjective, at best outdated or methodologically imperfect. Most studies were done at a time when audiences were in no position to select an appropriate voice track or captions with the help of a TV/player remote; additionally, not only amateur but also professional translations of that period left something to be desired quality-wise, while in general access to audiovisual material was somewhat more limited than it is today. Thus, a new reception study is in order, so as to verify if there have been any changes with respect to audience preferences in recent years. The present article is aimed at showcasing the results of such a study.

## 3. A quantitative survey among students

The study involved over 160 native speakers of Polish aged 19 – 24, all students of the University of Łódź. This profile was not only practical, but also helped achieve relative homogeneity. The respondents studied English, Italian, and sociology; their major is taken into account when analysing the results[5].

The factors under scrutiny in the study could be subsumed under five categories. Firstly, we analyse the degree to which the particular AVT modalities manipulate the source material or remain faithful to the original. The second factor is cognitive effort on the part of the audience depending on the modality used. Thirdly, we look at the suitability of the particular modality to the type of audiovisual material. The next factor is the choice of the modality by the viewer. Finally, the preference indicated in the previous step is analysed in the context of the technical potential afforded by digital television.

We took particular care to avoid any metalanguage of translation or linguistics when formulating the questions, so as not to inhibit comprehension on the part of the respondents. As the aim of the study was to garner information on the

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5　The authors wish to express thanks to Dr Łukasz Berezowski for his assistance.

widespread perception of AVT modalities, the questions were written as either colloquial or metaphorical (e.g. the use of cognitive distance to describe the relation between the source and target text). Answers were provided by choosing one or more from among multiple options and adding a comment if necessary.

## A.  Original vs. translation

### A.1  *Faithfulness*

The total number of answers to the first question was 163. Most respondents were of the opinion that the most faithful type of audiovisual transfer was subtitling (66.26%). The other two modalities (dubbing and voice-over) were deemed similarly close to the original , chosen by respectively 11.66% and 13.5% respondents. 8.59% respondents saw no significant difference between the three modes as far as proximity to the original was concerned.

The viewers who opted for subtitling consistently stressed the accessibility of the audio channel, an important source of information on for instance characters' emotions. A respondent commented on musicals as an example of the kind of audiovisual material where access to actors' real voices is paramount. Another respondent, rather interestingly, stressed that subtitles are the least subject to constraints out of the three modes in question, which would make it the preferred choice. Yet another viewer argued that his method of choice is voice-over, despite subtitles being the closest to the original, which would indicate that accuracy is not the number one criterion. A fourth respondent opined that her choice of subtitling is "obvious enough not to warrant any explanation".

The viewers who went for voice-over argued that "the other methods necessitate a succinct delivery" and that "time is not of the essence, so it is possible to render more than in the case of subtitling". Thus the less reductionist character of voice-over becomes an asset. Similarly, proponents of dubbing said that thanks to this method "all the original dialogue can be rendered without reduction".

The group of respondents who saw no difference in faithfulness between the three modalities explained that the decisive factor was the translator. A viewer who eventually decided to opt for subtitling, added that "each of the three [types] can be the closest to the original, it all depends on the quality of the translation". Another viewer, also a proponent of subtitling, highlighted quality and competence saying that subtitles are only closest to the original when they are "done by a competent translator".

### A.2  Manipulating the original

The second question is a natural concomitant to the first. The results of the study clearly point to subtitling as the least manipulative; 77.5% respondents chose this modality, pursuant to the choices made in answer to the first question. 13.13% viewers opted for voice-over as involving the least manipulation, which is almost identical to the percentage of respondents who nominated the same modality as the closest to the original. However, only 3.13% respondents said that the degree of manipulation in the three methods under scrutiny is comparable.

One respondent believed that subtitling makes it possible for audiences who speak the language of the original (which is English most of the time) to "follow the original dialogue". This comment should in our opinion be seen as both an opportunity to assess the quality of the translation and a call for an integrated interpretation of an audiovisual message, based on both the original and the subtitles. Interestingly and somewhat unpredictably, this comment was not made by an English language student. Another comment reflects awareness of the nature of (audiovisual) translation; a respondent who choose subtitling as the least manipulative modality said "which is not to say that there is no manipulation at all".

## B.  Cognitive effort on the part of the audience

Out of the 162 respondents, as many as 93.82% chose subtitling as the modality requiring the most processing effort on the part of the audience. Voice-over and dubbing got respectively 4.32% and 1.85% votes. Not a single respondent was of the opinion that the degree of cognitive effort in the three modalities was comparable.

To justify their choice of subtitling, respondents raise the issue of divided attention and the necessity to process language clues both aurally and visually. The comments point to the time frame in which subtitles appear on the screen being insufficient, which leads some viewers to skip the subtitled version altogether and only watch the given movie when the voice-over version is available.

The small percentage of respondents who were in favour of voice-over as requiring the most effort commented that the added cognitive effort may be due to the lektor obliterating the original actors' voices. A viewer says that "voice-over generates the most effort, because apart from the translation I try to focus on whatever I can make out from the original dialogue". The same viewer appreciates that her perspective may be subjective, as later on she adds "though most people seem to dislike subtitling".

The following question, the antithesis of the preceding one, was intended to corroborate the findings. In answer to the question which modality requires the least processing effort, 84.71% respondents named dubbing (interestingly, the figure is approximately 9% less than in the case of subtitling requiring the most effort). Subtitling was deemed the least difficult to process by a mere 1.76%, whereas voice-over was the choice of 12.94% respondents.

The choice of dubbing as the least challenging mode to process was justified in the following fashion: "there is no need to read or listen to two different audio tracks" or "as opposed to voice-over, dubbing lacks the distractor of the original dialogue". The latter quotation aptly points to the target text as superior to the original. The same viewer opined that dubbing generates little processing error due to the use of multiple voice talents and hence easy voice recognition.

## C. AVT modality in relation to audiovisual text type

### C.1 Feature films

In this part of the questionnaire the relationship between the type of audiovisual material and the modality of audiovisual translation was scrutinised. The first question was about the most prototypical type of material, viz. the feature film. The most frequent choice was subtitling, favoured by 65.24% of the 164 respondents. The second most preferable modality turned out to be voice-over (26.22%). Dubbing was preferred by merely 7.93% respondents, while only one person (0.61%) had no favourite.

The proponents of subtitling say that this modality allows the viewer to "listen to the voices of actors and discern their emotions". Another argument in favour of subtitling in feature films is the language learning factor. One respondent implies that audiovisual translation is "necessary evil", as the interpretation of the filmic message may be conditioned by the translated version and thus different from what the original creator may have intended. This being the case, subtitling seems the optimal mode, comparatively easy to "ignore" and "verify, so as to interpret the dialogue of one's own accord".

### C.2 Animated films

Out of the 163 responses given, dubbing is the clear favourite (87.12%). Subtitling came second, but opted for by just 9.2%, while 3.68 preferred voice-over.

Respondents note that the popularity of dubbing goes hand in hand with the characteristics of the target audience, that is to say young people[6]. Dubbing is comparatively easy to process, as there is no transfer between modalities. Moreover, this mode preserves the artistic value and emotional load carried by actors, as evidenced by the following comments: "[dubbing is] the most attractive form for children, the main audience of animated productions"; "cartoons should only be broadcast with dubbing, as it brings out the character".

A respondent in favour of dubbing commented regarding the target audience: "As children speak little or no English, dubbing is the method of choice; in the case of teenagers or adults, subtitling should be used, or best of all the original version".

These comments go to show that viewers appreciate having access to the original dialogue, but a modality which prevents such access is deemed suitable, as long as the original is beyond the particular viewer's reach; thus it's all a matter of being able to make a choice. The question of language command and learning pertains to this modality as well; a proponent of dubbing says: "I still believe that subtitles may be beneficial for children, who can learn a foreign language watching a cartoon at the same time". Another respondent alludes to the removal of original dialogue in dubbing, saying that the preferred translation strategy in the case of dubbing seems to be domestication, "the effect of which can be extremely funny". Another aspect under consideration is the recognisability of characters; one respondent says that as long as actors' faces are "clearly rendered", there is no impression of unnaturalness in dubbing.

## C.3  Documentaries

This category is where voice-over seems to be the method of choice (66.67%). Subtitling is barely half as popular (29.63%). Dubbing is chosen by just 3.09%, while only one person (0.62%) stated that all the three modalities in question are just as effective when it comes to documentaries.

A respondent who opted for voice-over pointed out the lack of character assignment in this modality (there is only one lektor in Polish voice-over). Interestingly, the same respondent opted for dubbing in her answer to the questions concerning animated films and features. Another viewer was critical in his assessment of subtitling, seen as a last-resort solution. "Usually there is no need to introduce subtitles, as the lektor is fully capable of narrating everything

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6    A respondent rightly observes that "animated films are diverse in terms of genre, type of animation, etc."

without omissions or changes of meaning". A further comment made in this section highlights the aspect of status quo "all Polish viewers are so used to Krystyna Czubówna's voice[7]".

## C.4  Sitcoms and TV shows

The last question concerning audience preferences according to programme type was directed at 164 respondents. 54.27% of them chose subtitling as the optimal method of translation when it comes to situational comedy and TV entertainment. The runner-up was voice-over (28.05%), followed by dubbing (15.85%). 1.83% respondents were of the opinion that all the three methods are equally successful in rendering this particular audiovisual text type.

Among the proponents of dubbing, one respondent pointed to quality assurance: "dubbed comedies may even be better than originals". Interestingly, this understanding of quality is not necessarily synonymous with translation quality. If the perlocutionary effect of the target language version is "better" than the original, is the translation itself superior to the original? Leaving translation ethics aside, this kind of relationship between the source and target text seems to fit within the paradigm of functionalist approaches to translation (cf. e.g. Reiss 1977/1989, Holz-Mänttäri 1984, Reiss and Vermeer 1984, Nord 1997), where the target text is understood as fairly autonomous (and by extension superior) in relation to the source text.

## D.  Choice of AVT modality

The following question pertained to the decisive factor in selecting the particular AVT modality in relation to the particular type of audiovisual text. There were 161 answers given in total. Almost half of the respondents (49.69%) were of the opinion that the ultimate choice should be the preserve of the audience. Nearly a third (29.19%) said that the decision should be made by the film creators[8]; while the sender (TV/cinema) was opted for by 17.39% respondents. The remaining answers (3.73%) imprecisely pointed to "experts" and in one case the translator.

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7    Krystyna Czubówna is Poland's best known female TV lektor, one of very few voice talents doing documentaries.

8    In fact, the figure is slightly higher, as one respondent pointed to not so much the "creator", but the cast (of actors) as the people responsible for the ultimate decision.

## E. The role of digital TV

### E.1  Choosing the modality

64.05% respondents said that they make use of the choices afforded by digital television networks and platforms when it comes to choosing the mode of AVT. Five respondents (3.27%), were unaware that such a choice is available[9]. Furthermore, a small group of respondents (3.77%) said they had no access to television as such, instead using computers and the internet.

### E.2  Change in audience perception

Despite most answers in the preceding question being affirmative, as many as 71.9% respondents said that there was no change in the patterns of behaviour after the introduction of digital TV. Thus the greater choice currently available to the viewer is deemed as virtually insignificant with respect to conventional and individual preferences.

### E.3  Availability of choice

In response to the question regarding the availability of choice of a particular AVT modality, most viewers (82.61%) refrained from a definitive answer explaining that they did not have sufficient data to make such an assessment. Those who did made up a total of 28.46% and provided very different answers, ranging from 2% to 90%.

A significant factor that sheds light on the results of this research is the command of the foreign language (that is to say the source language of audiovisual products), which tends to be English most of the time. On a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 is no command while 7 is native-like proficiency, the average declared command of English was 4.78. The same parameter (command of English) was predictably higher in the case of students of English (5.37) than in the case of students of Italian (4.43) and sociology (4.20). The high uniformity of the declared[10] language competence corroborates the methodologically sufficient uniformity of the research group. It has to be noted that the generally high command of a foreign language is a concomitant of preference for those methods of translating from that language which allow access to the original; were the respondents of an

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9   It is impossible to say clearly how many of the people who said they didn't make the choice were in fact unaware of this possibility.
10  Note that there is a likelihood of the Kruger-Dunning effect occurring here (Kruger and Dunning 1999).

age where the average command of foreign language is much lower, the viewing preferences would arguably differ.

Moreover, when seen from the perspective of study faculty, there is still significant uniformity. The main difference between students of English and the other two research groups is preference for subtitling as opposed to dubbing in the case of the former; this is particularly prominent in question 1[11] and 8 (cf. Table 1 and Table 2). This pattern is related to the higher average command of English, the didactic aspect of subtitling, and the embedded possibility of translation quality assessment, which is probably more significant for language students than students of sociology or another subject.

*Table 1*

|  | Which AVT type results in a version that is the closest to the original? | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | sociology | Italian | English |
| subtitling | 59.38% | 61.29% | 73.91% |
| dubbing | 12.50% | 16.13% | 7.25% |
| voice-over | 21.88% | 12.90% | 10.14% |
| no difference | 6.25% | 9.68% | 8.70% |

*Table 2*

|  | Which AVT type is the best choice for sitcoms and TV shows? | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | sociology | Italian | English |
| subtitling | 39.39% | 42.86% | 72.06% |
| dubbing | 27.27% | 22.22% | 4.41% |
| voice-over | 33.33% | 33.33% | 20.59% |
| no difference | - | 1.59% | 2.91% |

The results of the research also demonstrate the complex relationship between the amount of cognitive effort required for a particular audiovisual translation modality and audience preferences. Contrary to expectations, there is no universal desire to minimise that effort, as the modality requiring the most processing effort (subtitling) is seen as the most suitable method of translating feature films, TV shows, and sitcoms.

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11  Apparently sociology students tend to value voice-over more than language students do.

A significant variable, which can influence assessment of particular AVT modalities, is what Kahneman, Knetsch and Thaler (1991) refer to as *status quo bias*. This mechanism could for instance be seen as the rationale behind naming voice-over the method of choice for documentaries, or dubbing for animated movies. That being said, some respondents are adamant that the conventional, default choices are not in fact the best ones to make.

## 4.  Concluding remarks

The concept of mal nécessaire (necessary evil) is not infrequent in theoretical accounts of audiovisual transfer (Bogucki 2015, Marleau 1982, Tomaszkiewicz 2006). The underlying assumption is that translating audiovisual texts is always a compromise and audiences would be best off without it. Supremacy of source over target text is concomitant to any kind of translation (though arguably some kinds display a marginal degree of it), but in the case of audiovisual transfer it is hard to argue that the foreign language version may improve on the original or even merely equal it completely. Dubbing, as an instance of covert translation, may appear equivalent to the original, but even in this modality viewers are deprived of the original voices, a shortcoming that is perhaps less pronounced in the case of animated movies. Voice-over is superimposed on the original audio track and as such obliterates it, which viewers may find disconcerting, while subtitles increase the processing effort and distract the viewers' attention. On top of this, constraints of multifaceted nature are at work: linguistic, technical, and translational. Therefore, there does not appear to be an optimal mode of audiovisual translation; ultimately, the choice is a factor of conventions and norms that prevail in the given area, requirements made by the producer or film studio, technical and financial possibilities, individual viewers' preferences, type of audiovisual material that is being translated, as well as the audience's collective language competence.

Reception studies concerning less canonical modalities of AVT, like audiodescription (Chmiel and Mazur 2012) or surtitling (Rędzioch-Korkuz 2015) seem to indicate that audiences are content with the very availability of an audiodescribed or surtitled version and take any inadequacies lightly. In contrast, established and time-tested methods aimed at general audiences are met with greater awareness of a given method's potential, applicability, advantages, and drawbacks.

The present reception study is hoped to shed light on the complex issue of the choices available to the audiovisual translator in Poland, itself a complex AVT milieu. In no way does it purport to act as a thorough study of audiovisual translation modalities; however, it helps to understand the rationale behind selecting

a particular modality for an unobtrusive and comprehensive appreciation of a foreign audiovisual product.

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# AVT in the Media:
# Emergencies through conflicting words and contradictory translations

**Abstract:** Connected with a project on mediating emergencies (Federici 2016) and crisis communication (O'Brien 2016), this paper introduces approaches to study the use of audiovisual materials translated in online versions of daily newspapers in Italy. The first section of this paper discusses the journalistic context in which the audiovisual translations (AVT) of news are used; the second section introduces the theoretical trajectories to study these modes of audiovisual translation, from potentially using critical discourse analysis (CDA) of the textual features, to multimodal analysis of the translation modes in the current mediascapes (Pérez-González 2014). The third section illustrates key concepts that emerged from the investigation of a corpus of journalistic materials, which included embedded audiovisuals focused on emergencies and international responses.

The paper intends to show methodological shifts in studying representations of emergencies in translated news through the complex lenses of audiovisual translation modes. Embedded news items, audiences' interaction, and complex networked mediascapes in the confluence of different journalistic styles, expectations, and cultural settings create the illusion of transparent translations, whereas the source news items have been remarkably altered. This paper uses a number of mini case studies in order to elicit the vast number of research questions that emerge when looking at the role of audiovisual translation and of translators in relation to the description and representation of international crises.

## 1. Journalistic context

Journalistic language can never be entirely neutral. Online journalistic language constructs its meanings through a set of multimodal channels. In this context, the language of translated audiovisual materials in online newspapers is subject to reductions and interpolations in which the potentially conflictual choices of an ideological nature are difficult to disentangle. These three generally accepted statements lead to a range of observations in this paper that investigates more contradictory areas of 21st-century journalistic practices involving translation. The contradictions over the quality of translation and modes used relate to using established and new translation modes to react to the pace of news-making organizations; they also raise concerns about the visibility and reliability of language mediators involved in the audiovisual translations of clips to be published

respecting the time constraints of online newspapers. This article refers to the context of Italian online newspapers and, with a range of examples, illustrates the use of unusual AVT modes in this national context. These modes present many features of committed journalism, citizen journalism (Allan 2015), combined in the complex decision-making (Davier 2015) and linguistic processes of a current journalistic practices (Perrin 2013). By studying some of the audiovisual translation modes adopted in Italian national daily newspapers (over a range of articles from *Repubblica.it*, *Corriere.it*, *LaStampa.it*), this contribution explores questions regarding the methodological problems to be faced when attempting to investigate criteria for selection and use of AVT modes in order to render news on emergencies and crises. These parameters are interconnected with editorial policies in reporting news over crises and with the editorial choices used when prioritising news of national interest for the receiving audiences. The context considered in this article is nation-specific but evidence suggests that the increase in news videos (Kalogeropoulos *et al.* 2016; Patterson 2007) would entail similar concerns and changes in AVT practices world-wide. Journalistic translation research (as defined by Valdeón 2015) has at times focused on televised news broadcasts (to name a few, see Conway 2010, 2013; Kang 2007, 2012; van Doorslaer 2012; Zhang 2011). Hence, the case study here is not used for descriptive purposes or to seek ways of showing the universal nature of some approaches, but rather to show how reflections on the multimodal nature of online newswriting, and the role of translation within it, need to address a whole range of new questions in terms of methodology. In collecting the documentary evidence for the paper several criteria for selecting illustrations were considered as important:

1) Audiovisual materials had to come from online news dailies that represent the digital version of traditional nation-wide, widely read Italian newspapers.
2) Interventionist journalists, 'activist collective' journalism (Perez Gonzalez 2014), journalators (van Doorslaer's definition, 2012), or amateur translators were not considered in the sample.
3) Materials had to refer to crises that have 'news value' in Italian political discourse, which in turn assume social value in their presumed readership.
4) Commercial traditional press is subject to a set of constraints (Holland 2013) that can be partially overcome in online news – the texts selected had to be hybrid and multimodal texts that showed prominent examples of translated audiovisual materials.

The simplified corpus of journalistic materials, collected respecting the parameters described above, include embedded audiovisuals focused on emergencies and international responses that prominently feature translations, sometimes

foregrounded to the first page of the newspapers. The extreme examples in section 4 were extracted from a pool of 65 potential examples collected between February 2016 and October 2016; they offer macroscopic illustrations of the spread, breadth, and distribution of the phenomenon across different daily newspapers and different innovative uses of AVT modes. The samples include some culture-specific concerns, as well as widely covered international events, that overall reflect the current concerns among journalists and scholars of journalism studies regarding the role of 'mixed' media news writing. For these reasons, this contribution has to look at the journalistic context first.

By considering mainstream news media, this paper engages with traditional forms of journalism that are evolving within the current phase of 'transition' (Kuhn and Nielsen 2014) experienced in particular by political journalism in Western Europe – including journalistic reporting on diplomatic as well as crisis in international politics. Following Belizer (2015), as well as Kuhn and Nielsen (2014), the premise of the present study is that the current changes in the digital landscape and in news organizations are not a 'crisis' but an open 'transition'; the decrease of commercial income and the closure of some traditional press forms have not had the same effects across the globe – the Italian system has indeed changed but it also has retained some stylistic and interpretative features in its mainstream journalism that allow me to carry out this analysis in relation to concepts of transition and not of digital revolution. The transition experienced in news organizations that have had to find ever stronger commercial partnerships to *survive* the new multimedia landscape has also led to the proliferation of interventionist and iterative journalism, beyond the paradigm of 'citizen journalism' that emerged around a decade ago (Allan and Peters 2015), and new notions of cosmopolitan journalists (Lindell and Karlsson 2016). These forms of journalism are shaping news making especially in the areas that report global concerns as connected and interlinked with the local issues to which they may exert influence.

There is ever-growing evidence in the work of infield operators, as reported by the Communicating with Disaster-Affected Communities Network, for instance, that news translation plays an increasingly complex role in humanitarian and crisis response operations. News making extends to support an additional function of 'informative role' when emergencies disrupt societies; the problem lies with the definition of crisis and disruption, unless these are narrowed down to catastrophic natural disasters only. In this view, the commentary and interpretative role of news-makers as watchdogs of politicians should leave some space to the informative function on reporting facts of public usage. Yet discursively this stance is difficult to hold. Verbs, adjectives, nouns, active and passive moods all

correspond to more or less conscious choices to initiate what M.A.K. Halliday (1994) calls ideational functions of the language; the function that presides the interpretation of any given utterance tends to give it a value for the sender and receiver of the message. These functions become more visible in time-pressed translations of multimedia contents, which are embedded in online newspapers. Time pressures have an impact the choice of which 'crisis' to cover, 'how to' cover it, and which role should factual information and roles of 'public services' fulfil without prejudice to freedom of press are intricately difficult to distinguish. Furthermore, Cadwell and O'Brien (2016) have shown that translation, performed either by volunteers or commercial translators, becomes crucial when emergencies erupt. In crises, when complex communication infrastructures break down, and satellite or internet connections may be significantly reduced if not annulled, televised news and radio news take on the role of conveying crucial *information*, rather than news stories or news events. These are not factual reports on the events, but rather provisions of information on where to find access to essential goods, medical support, and legal information (for instance, on missing family members). Communities speaking languages other than the one used in the local mainstream news would need news translation to find out information; these communities are mixed and could consists of foreign language teachers, business people, tourists, and so on who would not normally require language proficiency in the national language(s) for the country in which they are temporarily residing (Cadwell and O'Brien 2016). Knowing what is happening via journalistic sources re-establishes an ephemeral, utilitarian, and tenuous relationship of trust with news media organizations – whereas this trust has been considerably eroded in the last two decades. The role of hybrid audiovisual translation materials in mainstream media then comes to serve different functions, for which there is a growing call in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Reduction (2015–2030) and adds new focus on access to information (discussed in Mysiak *et al.* 2016). This function is recognized by the Sendai Framework as humanitarian and crucial to prepare, sustain, and support countries in crises; translation and translators have core roles to play in these, possibly more than journalists. However, the journalistic depiction of the international crises go through a translatorial mediation at some point; in news videos, the point of mediation is made visible and obvious for the audiences.

In analysing the current audiovisual translation practices in the Italian context (which is per se a country subject to recurrent natural disasters and affected by long-lasting crisis in international migratory movements), examples show that the current hybridised translational approaches fit in with the expectations of the Sendai Framework; at national level the 5.8 Richter-scale earthquake of

24 August 2016 and the 6.6 Richter-scale earthquake of 30 October 2016 in Italy
have seen some evidence of this *information* role (e.g. publications of the lists of
missing people and of hospitalised people on online newspapers). They are used
to inform – as in the recent August 2016 earthquake in Amatrice, Italy – and to
communicate on a crisis of political relevance to Italians as in the case of Regeni
(discussed below). Both users and communication aids in disasters reveal shifting
trends in audiovisual modes, as participatory relationships between news media
organizations and their standard audiences, as well as their oppositional, emerging
voluntarist audiences have influenced the use of audiovisuals such as video news
and in turn the reliance on more common translation modes.

    Journalism studies takes for granted that Italian news media are 'polarised'
(Mancini 2005) and that 89% of audiences use televised news to obtain their
information (Cornia 2014: 48). It is legitimate to wonder why there is such
wide-spread use of audiovisual materials in online versions of traditional na-
tional newspapers. Or why so many of these audiovisuals are presented with
very visible translations? According to a sophisticated overview study of the
Italian media context, by Alessio Cornia (2014), the traditional 'opinionated'
and 'polarised' paradigm of Italian mainstream media continues to be relevant
for those areas of the Italian audiences that are politically active, engaged in
their relationship with political issues. The Italian Institute of National Statis-
tics (ISTAT 2014) shows that the most committed groups of people that en-
gage in politics and read online news are groups aged 25–35 and those aged
over 60, with a core shared feature: both groups have high levels of education.
Eco (1973) originally pointed out that the political language of the Italian tradi-
tional press possesses the function of a close, in-group code of communication
between political parties. Items on national newspapers were coded messages
exchanged in a linguistic variety of Italian that was almost unintelligible to the
largest part of the population, but reached the 'audiences' of the individual
newspaper and of the intended receiver(s) of the sender's coded message. As
Caimotto (2016) suggests, this form of in-group communication has pervaded
the Italian journalistic system even in terms of its translation of foreign news.
Hence, crises and disasters are reported on with the intent of inscribing them
into the political discourse relevant to their Italian readers (a common form of
reframing, as in Kang 2007, but with extreme purposes in the national context).
These established habitus of Italian news organizations permeate their current
recourse to audiovisual materials and their translation embedded in the mul-
timodal syntax of their online versions. The commercial and tribal audience is
the same (Orengo 2005), hence commercial and video clips are targeted to the

like-minded people who are the bedrock audiences to which the newspapers address their news articles; although this praxis is common in most journalistic traditions, in the Italian system it is called the '1500-reader audience' (Forcella 1959, quoted and translated in Hallin and Mancini 2004:96). Cornia (2014:50) emphasises that 'Despite the fact that the Italian daily press has always reached a narrow audience and that it is currently facing a general decline in circulation, it still remains an important area within the national political communication system.' In other words, the means of communication have changed and moved from paper to digitized, online versions, yet their intrinsic functions and audiences have remained virtually the same as those in-groups of senders-receivers described by Eco. The multimedia content, especially its parts focused on foreign affairs, speak to an élite audience that is educated, politicized, and belongs to the relatively small proportion of Italians who regularly use the internet (see DESI data for 2016, in *Figure 1*).

*Figure 1. Definition: DESI Use of Internet Dimension calculated as the weighted average of the three sub-dimensions: 3a Content (33%), 3b Communication (33%), 3c Transactions (33%), (2014–2016).*
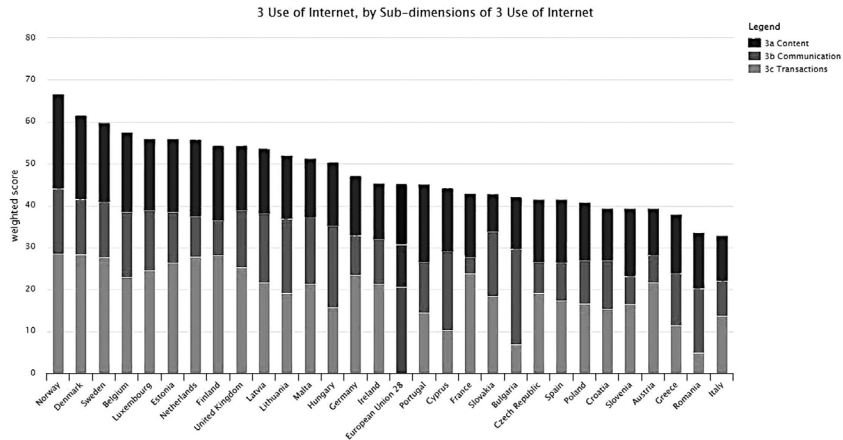


Source: European Commission, Digital Scoreboard. https://digital-agenda-data.eu/datasets/desi/visualizations.

The 'opinionated journalism' (Cornia 2014:54) of Italian newspapers is equally aimed at their likeminded readers, who belong to the tribe that shares the same ideology (van Dijk 1997), as well as some readers of the ideology opposite to the newspaper for self-confirmation of the distance from the *other* point of view. The digital materials comply with this form of journalism for insiders, thus '[Italian

journalists] mix the reported facts with their personal evaluations – in order to offer to their audience a distinctive interpretation of what is going on in the political arena' (Cornia 2014: 55). The proximity of political journalists with the politicians of reference is not uncommon in political journalism, possibly this is the norm (Kuhn and Nielsen 2014). The Italian specificity is that politicians and their press offices represent *ad personam* sources of information for the political journalists of their same political leaning. In order to be able to report on political debates, Italian newspapers regularly end up building news reports through reciprocal readings and rewritings, so that the opinions expressed in the political debate by opposing parties or factions are represented through the reporting initiated by each function in its preferred newspaper. Newspaper reports seem to rewrite news from each other, thus initiating a type of press-centric spiral. This approach skews the use of data from translations (for instance the issue of multiple conversions of units of measures, discussed in Federici 2010) or translated sources. This unique approach to journalistic sources is critically perceived in the Anglophone tradition of journalism studies 'Sources and sourcing practices differ across cultures: […] Italian journalists actively choose sources who will better advocate their cause' (Zelizer and Allan 2010:143–144). The foreign, international affairs are re-framed into these mechanisms that give news value only in relation to the political significance of the event for the Italian political (not even social) arena. These mechanisms of political analysis do not domesticate the other, but because, for journalists, news items assume news value only when they are expendable in the Italian political arena, the *voluntarist* and activist use of biased translations is merely part of the editorial practices. The interventionist approaches discussed in Perez Gonzalez (2014) are at times only partially outside the official news-making channels in Italy and some early initiatives have been taken over by standard news-making organizations – such is the case with *YouReporter.it*. This platform for participative journalism includes news videos uploaded by from witness or citizen journalists; it was a limited company but has been taken over by the RCS Media Group S.p.A, a major editorial force in Italy, that currently owns major newspapers in Italy and Spain (including *Corriere della Sera* and its online version *Corriere.it*). YouReporter.it is now a hybrid source for several national broadcasters (TV and online press) thus creating a hybrid platform that was once free and interventionist is now getting closer to news-making corporations, whilst retaining its bottom-up approach to news gathering.

In this developing mediascape, Cornia (2014: 56) underlines the significance and permanence of the frame of 'political conflict' as the dominant frame within which any foreign news has to be reconfigured, and whereby in France, Germany,

Spain and the United Kingdom the frame is the same for 20% of all news distribution, 40% of all Italian political news abide by this frame, a figure that is double that of comparator countries. In this highly recognizable context, a specific note on internet access levels becomes necessary. Italians have a very low rate of internet access, which has shrunk rather than grown in proportion to other European states (see DESI figures). Online news access varies in the principal newspapers from 600 thousand to 1.2 million daily hits; some data refers to unique hits, but there are discrepancies with news video on the online content as counters do not seem to be accurate. The concerns on studying reception numbers and responses of audiences are at the core of many research questions; they cannot be addressed in this contribution. In this specific online context characterised by nation-specific journalistic practices, with relatively low rates of access to online content for communication and information, the growth of interactive components and news videos on online Italian newspapers is remarkable, also for the direct impact it has on AVT modes, and for its configuration as a 'last resort' to attract more readers by innovative techniques (as well as the semi-participative platforms described), as explained in the next section.

## 2. Audiovisual translation modes and fashions: the journalistic problem

Increased number and peaks of news video content are common trends in news making (Kalogeropulos *et al.* 2016) and they naturally tend to be proportionally higher in news items related to breaking news on erupting crises – for instance, terrorist attacks, wars, disasters, and diplomatic standoffs. The proliferations correspond to increasingly creative uses of AVT modes. The English term 'mode', as in translation mode, in its Latinate form offers a useful assonance with the Italian 'moda', meaning 'trend, fashion.' Arguably, in audiovisual translation the notion that translation modes are a question of habit and national traditions, though part of changing traditions, is relatively consolidated in relation to the discourse on audiovisual materials for entertainment and infotainment (film documentaries, nature and historical documentaries, and so on). Were we to switch focus to the perception of these modes as ephemeral trends and preferences, hence *mode*, fashions that are exposed to change we would be better positioned to engage with potentially new avenues of response and reception research based on freer mental constructions. The choice of one mode over another is certainly dictated by external factors rather than intrinsic values on the chosen modes or evidence-led analyses of the 'best option' for the demands and expectations for source language products (see Bogucki 2015: 193–94, on Polish voice-over mode). In the

debate over dubbing and subtitling traditions for commercial audiovisual transla-
tions in Italy, the concept of choice as dictated by habit is well-documented and
substantiated by a number of studies in audience preferences and expectations
(see Antonini and Chiaro 2009: 97). Parini (2015: 49) in discussing multilingual
fictional films suggests that the emergence of changing habits in some Italian
audiovisual contexts could be the beginning of a revision of the causal relation
between tradition, financial choice, and selected mode. Indeed, production pro-
cesses are complex and subject to a number of agents, some of whom decide
without any attention to assessing the benefit of one mode over another. Yet the
use of subtitling, voice-over, and lower quality dubbing is emerging beyond the
fundubbing and funsubbing domains (Massidda 2015), and the use of news videos
globally grows and demand for their translations equally grows.

     In the context of journalistic translation, the use of audiovisual materials shows
an acceptance of the parameters of choice by purposes, which entail the use of
a variety of AVT modes, depending on the translation purpose to be achieved.
There is evidence of a refreshing attitude towards translation modes, as news
videos make use of a broader variety of modes, among those available (contrary
to examples of unchangeable practices of the 21st century, critically discussed
in Federici 2009, 2011). Solutions are not a priori tradition-driven or market-
demanded options; translation modes seem to be adopted without a specific,
consistent, biased, or imposed preferred option. Of course, this positive element
in the plurality of choice is accompanied by quality concerns, referring to respect
for working conditions, rewards, as well as quality and qualifications of the trans-
lators involved in these processes dictated by the incremental speed of reaction
expected in news-making contexts.

     Quality assurance of audiovisual materials embedded in online versions of the
dailies has never been a concern for journalists who do not perceive translation
separated from their work, but merely a sub-ordinate aspect of their writing duties
(see McLaughlin 2013; Bielsa and Bassnett 2009). The increase of mixed multi-
modal elements in online versions of the traditional press has not corresponded
so far to an increase in the academic analysis of this wide-spread phenomenon.
Pérez-González (2014a) discusses the interventionist 'active collectives', which
have produced subtitles of news as an alternative to institutional and traditional
news organizations, and highlights the emergence of both a new demand and a
new offer for these interventionist news makers. Both the journalistic context
elicited in Section 1 above, and the data on internet usage in Italy (see *Figure 1*),
which depicts nation-specific approaches, are needed to consider these emergent
phenomena against a rise of participatory activities within the forums of the

traditional, polarized Italian press in its online versions. In the intensive 15 years of journalistic translation research, a range of studies have focused on writing practices (from Stetting 1989 to Holland 2013), on news agencies and translators (Bielsa 2007; Bassnett and Bielsa 2009), on televised news (van Doorslaer 2012). There is less evidence of analyses focused on the multimodal contexts of online press. Arguably, these modes can be considered as evidence of the powerful influence derived from the 'emergence of non-linear models of communication' that Pérez-González (2014a:209) sees as having profound 'implications for audiovisual translation practices', which is also manifested in the hybrid positions of such platforms as *YouReporter.it*.

The phenomenon is equally linked with the traditional press and its attempts to defend its role in the political arena, especially in relation to attributing 'relevance' and news value to news coming from abroad. This action of appropriation for re-framing purposes goes hand-in-hand with the increased acceptability of multiple audiovisual translation modes that arise from the activities of anti-establishment collaborative crowds working in the Italian fansubbing and fundubbing communities. The re-appropriation of the right to establish newsworthiness goes through the adoption of new, initially participatory innovations in the use of alternative translation modes. Cornia (2014:57–60) suggests that video broadcasts online are a strategy adopted by the traditional press to raise the declining numbers of readers. In other words, by acknowledging the prevalent consumption of televised news, the sector of online newsmaking has increased its 'tv.com' areas in the daily newspapers thus endeavouring to keep readers interested to their textual content whilst consuming also short news videos. With the constant increase in (relative) unique accesses to the online newspapers (comparing Audipress[1] data from 2010 to 2016), news makers consider using multimedia to complement the written offering as appropriate in the multifarious context of news consumption.

The use of multimedia especially clips allows journalists to compete again for scoops and breaking news with televised news broadcast especially on commenting

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1    Audipress is the official survey of the Italians' habits in relation to purchase of and access to daily newspapers (in digital and press versions) and magazines. Its data focus on reading patterns of daily newspapers, 'weekend' issues, weekly, and monthly publications including 125 national and local news outlets. Audipress is a private company that is externally audited by three institutions specialised in statistics and verified by a third external body; the findings of Audipress regular surveys are then submitted to the Italian Autorità per le Garanzie nelle Comunicazioni, the ombudsman for communication. The data present their weaknesses as any statistical data but they are the most accurate for the Italian context.

foreign affairs. These clips offer partial substitutes to the decline of the foreign correspondent as a journalistic figure (Archetti 2012). It also allows journalists to spin the source text message by framing it *before* anybody else does. Undeniably, quality of rendering cannot be a core consideration for the time constraints and the new modes chosen. Quality assurance of the translated audiovisual can be overlooked but the obscure struggles to justify the regularity with which errors or slips are always in favour (see Section 3 below) of the target-language reframing and of the opinionated, polarised frame determined by the editorial policies of the newspapers and of its audiences' expectations are very much perceivable.

The news videos considered in this study work as a sample of 'novelties', which is neither comprehensive nor in-depth, as its primary objective is to raise the question of what methods we should adopt to analyse the position and function of foreign news videos and their translation in current news-making practices. They are macroscopic examples of narratives of crises reframed for Italian audiences. Firstly, their connection with the theme of 'crisis translation' – within the parameters of a broader project engaging with the multi-fold issues of identifying roles and modus operandi of those who translate in crises (Cadwell and O'Brien 2016; Federici 2016; O'Brien 2016). Secondly, they reflect the spread and variety of translation modes that 'interventionist activities' in the news mediascapes (Pérez-González 2014a) have brought to the front pages of both online national and local newspapers. Thirdly, they present different legacy trails that move from the translated audiovisuals into national re-framing and then move towards the self-referential national press in Italy leaving a set of influential clues that cannot be examined without having recourse to new research methods. Finally, their discursive stance can be considered according to observer-centred methods from critical discourse analysis and potentially from recent, revised forms of multimodal analysis.

## 3. Methodological impasse: multimodal analysis, circulation, and audience

Alternative AVT modes bring forward the necessity for innovative methodological approaches to study them. When carrying out an investigation into texts published into online newspapers, the methods used to look at the linguistic makeup of the articles, their stylistic and political origin in the Italian context, and the additional complexity of a multimodal framing soon lead me to focus on a range of methodological doubts. How can we study these phenomena without falling in too many simplifications of what a complex system of production and consumption of news actually is? This section engages with the methods considered,

prior to introducing the analysis carried out on data obtained from one of these methodological approaches; the illustrations that follow in the next sections show the potential productivity of such an approach as well as its intrinsic limitations.

To discuss translated news in the Italian news media landscape, previous works have considered imagology (Filmer 2016), critical discourse analysis (Federici 2010), re-framing (Orengo 2005), corpus-based comparative approaches (Caimotto 2016). The definition of critical discourse analysis that is better applied to such studies was given in Weiss and Wodak (2003: 12), 'studies in critical discourse analysis are multifarious, derived from quite different theoretical backgrounds and orientated toward different data and methodologies'. Fowler (1991) was among the first to focus on critical discourse analysis of news items from an Hallidayan linguistic perspective (1973). Probably cognitive linguistics (von Hoek 1999: 134) intended as 'explicating the intimate relationships between language and other cognitive faculties', will be more regularly considered when integrated to multi-sensorial data collection methods. These intertwined cognitive faculties are in fact activated by the multimodal messages of the news videos in different ways from the text-dominated news items. They deserve multisensorial data analysis but so far no extensive research in this direction exists; there are studies on the cognitive load of re-speaking live news to produce immediately accessible subtitled translations of TV broadcasts (Szarkowska *et al.* 2016), but not on audience reception of news.

Currently, the issue of assessing audiences' responses to the Italian press rests on the premise that even the general public, beyond the insiders and the political actors who read the representations of political conflicts from many news outlets, that is the core readers of daily newspapers are polarised (as described in Section 2 above); hence there is a belief that the average reader is a known entity and has a relatively high level of education, as the majority of the general public prefers TV broadcast of news as their dominant, if not only, source of news. For Cornia (2014:30) 'Italian information consumption, even today, is marked by a high level of selective exposure to the news'. This selection is conscious and explicit. Arguably, all news systems rely to a degree of affiliation and subscription to the editorial line of the chosen news organization – the sharing of the same Hallidayan ideational function of language. Such discursive affiliation of individuals to the narrative frames provided by their *chosen* providers of news represent a construction of reality shared by the in-group people (van Dijk 1997). This in-group, consisting of readers, news-makers, journalists, witness journalists, creates the external relations that determine the pre-existing context in which the translation reframes the foreign into their narrative, as a set of internal discursive relation.

'The analysis of external relations is the analysis of their relations with other elements of social events and, more abstractly, social practices and social structures' (Fairclough 2003:36); the analysis of the translation could be an analysis of the internal relations in the reframing.

As the 'conflictual' frame is twice as wide-spread as in many other European news-making traditions, the Italian readerships' sense of belonging corresponds to a 'tribalisation' of the news (Orengo 2005). For Cornia (ibid 58) digitization of news media has further radicalized this Italian phenomenon. In a way, we could read these results in terms of the uninterrupted fluidity of the social phenomena, where digitization and globalization are not static but rather dynamic phenomena in continuous change determining new hybrid texts reflecting the current complexity of reality (Marais 2014), as well as hybrid readerships consisting of 'young' and 'old' age-based groups who access instant news at the same rate with different systems of validation and rejection of the messages at play.

In this context, translation of foreign news short-circuits the system. As 45% of newspaper journalists in traditional and online newspaper pressrooms are political journalists in Italy (Corvia 2014:58), translation-mediated news items of political significance risk undermining the journalists' role as 'insiders' and their function in the journalistic reporting of political events; hence the need for a stronger conflictual reframing than in other news organizations in Western Europe. Desk journalists and 'churnalists' (Nielsen and Kuhn 2014:13) prevail over other actors in these practices. Sources are websites of other news makers, as much as news agencies, and they become central to providing materials to be interpreted from the foreign and its reframing in the conflictual narratives of antagonistic Italian politics. Translated news items nevertheless leave what could be defined as a 'legacy trail'. They leave in their wake a pathway of linguistic cues (at times a paragraph, other times a sentence, often just two- three-word collocations) that are picked up by the other opposing, rival, and antagonistic Italian news makers to establish an entirely Italy-focused use of the news from abroad (see the issue of multiple conversions of measures of speed in Federici 2011). We are not looking, then, at source texts and target texts within whichever loose definition we may wish to attribute them: written source texts and target texts as recognizable and full texts are the exceptions (signed by the translators; and from October 2016, *Corriere.it* has presented news about the Italian earthquake in an English version – though the phenomenon is not consistent or congruous). When we seek translated news from abroad, we normally find snippets, soundbites of news that propagate their influence across the self-referential mechanisms of Italian press, as soon as one of the newspapers picks up the news from abroad and initiates the process of

legitimization, whose legacy trail will then be visible in a number of national and local news items across different newspapers.

As an example of this practice, left-wing oriented national daily newspaper *la Repubblica* (2nd most read press paper, 1st for online circulation) feeds its interests in framing news from the United Kingdom by rewriting and editing materials that *The Guardian online* has analysed as a criticism of what the *Daily Mail online* is discussing that day: the source is known but it is already a doubly mediated text. Through convoluted passages of acculturation and appropriation of the foreign, the Italian left-wing newspaper re-frames the already framed materials that *The Guardian online* has selected as a source of editorials. This morsel of foreign news begins then to establish its own parallel life in the legacy trail it leaves from *la Repubblica* to *Corriere* (1st most read press paper, 2nd for online circulation), and the discourse then reverberates into online dailies, thus giving space to more extremist ideas (*Il Giorno, Il Fatto*) or less widely-circulated but highly influential newspapers' expressions of powerful lobbies (*La Stampa*, part of the Agnelli group). Tracking these morsels of translated news is not easy, especially for the purpose of full contrastive and comparative studies. They present several methodological challenges; a bilingual corpus of source and target texts of news cannot be built up as many of the news agencies released in English enter into the Italian media through an Italian-language national press agency (ANSA), which *possibly* provides the first translation of the news from abroad. These items from the press agency then become the sources for the Italian discussions of the foreign news items. No bilingual corpora of English, French, Spanish, Arabic, or Chinese news into Italian can easily be built, as full translations are rare exceptions to the rule in the written texts. The data has to be extracted from a monolingual Italian corpus of news, once any morsel of foreign news has been identified, selected for study, and collected into a partial corpus – which leaves little scope to consider corpus-based techniques of analysis. The news videos represent text-heavy hybrid forms of communication, whose immediacy of uploads leave them more exposed to being studied as 'translated materials', because their translations are visible.

Although we can presume a standard understanding of the notion of *audience* by considering the sense of belonging to an in-group of likeminded people with similar political ideals (as described in Section 2 above), more complex and authentic models of audience presuppose considering the position of those who reject their views and buy into those of the opposite. These are the out-group of people who read newspapers of different leaning in order to reinforce their expectations and predictions of finding *different* interpretations of events according

to the opposed worldview. This approach could lead us to consider the notion of audience response accepted within Journalism Studies; however, this approach is limiting. The analyses of forums and social media would potentially offer a more multifaceted form of response. They remain only qualitative and reductive as approaches, as they do not represent a movement away from the normal study of the in-group/out-group dynamics which are automatically interrelated with the notion of expected readership and audience for the particular newspapers in whose forms the readers have participated. The analysis of social media responses to foreign news could be an alternative – by investigating proliferation, distribution, and spread of memes and feeds these approaches could complement the analysis. However, they equally widen an existing issue: these immediate forms of communication regularly betray only partial readings of articles or events that are being commented on. The impossibility of considering these reactions as reactions to the news but rather as emotive reactions to the 'thought' of a news makes them of little interest from this perspective, as they are more interesting as social dynamics of copying mechanisms (Bentley *et al.* 2011).

Whatever can or cannot yet be said about the audience, we are left to look at what audiences can *read* and view out of news videos. In this perspective, the option of conducting research through Critical Discourse Analysis techniques would remain appealing; though exercised with a full, self-reflective awareness that it introduces immediately a strong subjective stance in the criticism proposed, and its consequential reflections. From its early days, critical discourse analysis of news has considered the international dimension in which news discourses emerge. In his *News Analysis* (1988) van Dijk carries out a series of attempts at scrutinising the evolution of one worldview on international events by analysing news reports published from a sample of worldwide news makers. The analysis was revolutionary in a sense but also showed a surprising silence on the issue that this scrutiny was in fact carried out on a range of translations into English.

Over 15 years separate Stetting's early cursory focus on the hybrid translational processes described as 'transediting' (1981) occurring in the production of news flows, from Schäffner's watershed article (2004) considering the role of CDA as a tool to acknowledge the position of translation in reporting the foreign. In the first decade of the 21st century, globalisation and global translation trends became an ever-present phenomenon open to epistemological reflections on how it affected long-established practices. The current access to news items of hybrid and multi-modal media is immediate; it is expected to provide views of the foreign as delivered by the news within seconds of the event happening. The phenomenon began to be studied for the intrinsic interconnections between distant societies, their languages,

and their representation in the bubble of the news immediacy from the 1980s on-
ward, with reflections on news translation gradually following the seminal reflec-
tions on the linguistic impact of journalism and the importance of 'news as stories'
(respectively in the influential Fowler 1991; Bell 1991). Such deceptive immediacy
is ever more evident in audiovisual contents embedded in online dailies. They are
different from clips designed, directed, and edited to appear on televised news, the
translation of which have come under scrutiny (Kang 2007; van Doorslaer 2012) and
from the multimodal materials of news agencies, whose role in the news-making life
cycle has also come under extensive scrutiny (to name but a selection Bielsa 2007;
Bielsa and Bassnett 2009; Clausen 2003; McLaughlin 2013, 2015).

A critical discourse analysis of the text in these audiovisuals would appear
well-suited for a number of reasons. Italian linguists (Loporcaro 2006) demon-
strate the prevalence of textuality in Italian online news. Although news items
have become accessible on the internet, the language and textual features of the
news items themselves have not evolved into a different *medium* of communica-
tion, but the text-dense news items appear on digital platforms rather than on
paper. The use of a new means of communication does not presuppose nor entail
alternative stylistic or syntactic norms – though research on press offices' use of
social media may soon reveal some changes to these paradigms. Hence, even the
audiovisual materials embedded in online news are text-dense and their transla-
tions are based and driven by the hierarchical importance of the *text* as a written
sign. Both the lack of standards and time for quality assurance of the translations
of these audiovisual materials have led to an enhanced form of *hybridity*. On the
one hand, they do not to comply with the expectations, habits, and traditions
of audiovisual translations for commercial purposes (as discussed in Section 2)
and on the other hand the source texts are considered as *written texts* which only
happen to be oral. They do not even fall within the oft-used linguistic definitions
of the journalistic varieties for broadcasting (such as written texts to be spoken,
scripts to be performed orally, radio speeches, or the other linguistic varieties that
undergo adaptations in translation).

As emerged from the examples considered in Section 4, which represent a
select range of materials that show prominent translations, which are text-dense
and manipulated, the emphasis on their textual nature underpins the translation
choices. These choices then undergo the well-known manipulations realised to
legitimise the editorial stand of the Italian news organisation that publishes them
(Caimotto 2016; Federici 2011; Orengo 2005; McLaughlin 2015).

At this intersection, Valdéon's 2015 overview of the Journalistic Translation
Research so far meets with the methodological issues of studying AVT in news

media proposed in this paper. Valdéon (2015: 640) stresses that an early (earliest?) attempt to work on subtitled news took place in 1998, 'Kwieciňsk studied voice-over in a variety of [Polish] media programs on the one hand, and printed news translations in the *Forum* magazine on the other. He aimed to describe the many domesticating strategies present in audiovisual products and news translation'. An analysis of televised news translations discussing the complex inter-relational networks affecting translation as part of journalistic writing and editing processes is given in Kang (2012) with a case study from South Korea. Kang (2012:441). reminds the readers that 'interpretation, representation, and attribution of meaning, especially vague or opaque meaning, in media translation is sensitive to institutional forces that play an important role in creating an intellectual context for conflict.' These forces are very active and, in a perhaps paradoxical way, very explicit about their presence in the Italian news organizations. Any method of analysis needs to consider this specificity of the Italian context.

At this very point in the investigation, we face the awkwardness of a methodology that needs to take into consideration more variables that its current methods allow it to do. Towards the end of the 1990s, among scholars of journalism and communication studies, the unprecedented growth of news reporting from around the world led them to underline the sense of immediacy that such growth brought about. At the moment of writing, this concept has become so strongly embedded as to feel common place. However, the subtle distinctions between perception of proximity and immediacy, and the unchanged reality of distance and complexity that these concepts initially hid have become more evident. The possibility of reacting or interacting ever more immediately to news from everywhere in the world led early researchers to postulate a conclusive interconnection of the phenomenon of international news making with the rampant phase of economic globalisation. The global news phenomenon called for a redefinition of concepts, first of all of 'news'. By asking what is 'news from around the world', Van Ginneken (1998:40) argues 'News is usually said to concern the "really important events". This answer seems satisfying until one comes to realize that it is not at all obvious what is "real", what is "important", or what is an "event"'. Other voices had already begun to acknowledge the phenomenal shrinking of notions of distance as well as those of space (Cronin 2006), which ultimately lead to our current, and arguably flawed sense of news immediacy (see Federici 2016: 1–3). News translation contributes to making this sense of immediacy exponentially more deceptive of the true spatial-temporal distance between people and places, which is not a problem, until this deception permeates other spheres culminating in simplifications of the cultural distances that continue to exist and to enrich our complex world. In this simplification and deception, the

usage of audiovisual materials with immediately translated content equally feeds the sensation of a non-mediated communication that goes in lieu of any cultural and anthropological reasoning on the significance and poignancy of considering that much distance remains from the source message.

The potentially conflictual nature of the position of foreign news, caught between the interest for the foreign and the need for relevance to the local, seems to be dissipated in the national reframing within which translations operate. The translated news must and eventually does fit in with the opinionated standards of the Italian framing of the news. Audiovisual materials offer a unique resource to ensure that their perceived immediacy and their openness to manipulation – justifiable by referring to constraints of both editorial and temporal nature. The perception of immediacy is given by the foreign news in a glocalised audiovisual rendering (paraphrasing Díaz-Cintas and Remael 2007: 229–230). Are journalists expected to be global and cosmopolitan or are they still relying on existing paradigms to define themselves? It is interesting to notice that a convergence of scholarship in both translation studies and in journalism studies towards issues of local and global belonging with recent publications (respectively van Doorslaer 2016 and Lindell and Karlsson 2016). In Journalism Studies, the complex agencies in any form of news productions have been long since the focus of many studies. According to Lindell and Karlson (2016: 3)

> An abundance of previous research illustrates that ownership, workplace hierarchies and organization, peer pressure, information subsidies, audience and advertising considerations, amongst many other things, influence what stories are told and how (Shoemaker and Reese 1996; Schudson 2003). Hence, there might exist a gap between journalists' normative (global) outlook and their practice since they are neither fully autonomous nor completely isolated individuals.

The double screen of immediacy, in the speed of transmission of news from around the world and the fact that translations appear to make these news items and their implicit culture-specific issues transparent, permeates the examples of AVT modes used for the news videos described in the following section.

## 4.  Examples

In organizing the preliminary set of examples of novel uses for AVT modes embedded in online newspapers, this article selected illustrations that are emblematic. This is a preliminary study to be followed by a further-reaching and analytical study of broader corpora, which will entail more in-depth discussions of the phenomenon in order to understand in full its reverberations. The description of the phenomenon remains a priority as it serves to take stock of the innovations and of the challenges

they entail from the point of view of journalistic translation research. The evidence considered here is not strictly speaking statistically significant, but it is highly significant from a qualitative point of view as the 8 months considered in the study have seen a regular increase in publication of translated news videos. Furthermore, they are all visible translations, yet offered as a 'transparent tool' to access the original foreign news. As they are concerned with breaking news, they rely on ad-hoc translators to deal with the crises that generated the news abroad. Evidence of direct involvement of professionals is difficult to gauge, the quality produced is limited and only the exceptions, the signed articles in translations, refer to commentaries and editorial pieces rather than to breaking news. By studying the translation modes adopted in *laRepubblica.it*, *Corriere.it*, *LaStampa.it*, which are respectively the 1st, 2nd and 3rd most widely read (or distributed) online newspapers (and 2nd, 1st, and 3rd respectively on paper format; cf. Audipress 2014), this paper touches upon questions regarding the methodological problems faced by any attempt to investigate the modes of audiovisual translation used to render news on emergencies and crises from English, Arabic or French audiovisual sources and are edited for use as online contents in daily newspapers. Four macroscopic illustrations of the hybridity and fluidity of AVT modes in online Italian press in the current practice are used; none can be comprehensively discussed in detail; the illustrations intend to map the new extremes (but of growing visibility) in AVT modes adopted in the news video translation, for what appears to be an unregulated area of practice, which is free from the conventions of commercial AVT modes.

## 4.1 Text translation and subtitles

One particular diplomatic crisis, in which the use of translation in a journalistic setting became prominent, was the tragic death of Giulio Regeni, doctoral student at Centre for Development Studies of the University of Cambridge. Regeni was conducting research in Cairo when he disappeared; his body was found mutilated as a result of extreme torture in a ditch alongside the Cairo-Alexandria highway on the outskirts of Cairo on 3 February 2016. The Egyptian enquiry on his death did not involve Italian investigators as expressly asked by triggering the diplomatic agreements in place between Egypt and Italy. This refusal and the concerns about the circumstances of this death in the independent press in Egypt rose suspicions from the very beginning; Italian journalists and the political debate led to an interruption of diplomatic relations between the two countries in April 2016. Daily reports on the Regeni case appeared between February and May 2016, with a peak around March when the Egyptian authorities reported that the suspected killers of Regeni had been involved in a shootout with the

police and had been shot. Members of the family of the individual killed in these circumstances were arrested after releasing interviews in which they also voiced their suspicion about the investigation. The circumstances of these killing were queried by several Egyptian news outlets, and *Daily News Egypt*, an independent online, anti-establishment, and interventionist news organization put together a documentary with interviews with the relatives of the 'suspected killers' who died in the shootout with the police. On 9 April 2016, the documentary was released and picked up by the Italian newspapers. Around 20:00 EST the news made it to the front page of *laRepubblica.it*, there was a link to the news video accompanied by another link to the PDF file of the translated transcript of the film documentary (see *Figure 2*). The Egyptian variety of Arabic in the interviews is challenging for both its phonetic specificity that may be challenging to some Arabic-native speakers who are not familiar with this variety, and for the audio quality.[2] The translations into Italian show many lacunae in rendering the source text; they can be attributed to using an Arabic speaker unfamiliar with the local, oral variety, but the fact that it was also used to produce substandard subtitles for the news video version shows that the visibility of the translation does not lead to considerations about verifying its quality over time. In fact, a comment on the poor quality of the interpretation of the Arabic, which was placed under the video 45 minutes after the newspaper had uploaded it, disappeared from the forum which was subsequently closed to comments.

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2   I am very grateful to Dr Khaled Al Shehari, of Sultan Quboos University in Oman, for his great help with a full translation and stylistic analysis into English of the original Egyptian documentary. Access to native speakers of Egyptian was necessary for Dr Al Shehari, himself a native-speaker of Arabic, and it was very clear that sensitive passages that present ambiguous information in the documentary are difficult to render because of these constraints.

*Figure 2.* Breaking (translated) news. *(http://www.repubblica.it/)*



There is evidence that the use of a visible translation has attracted readers to engage with the text in the forum, within an hour of activating the video (see *Figure 3*). The journalistic practice here shows however an attention to both the importance of a full text translation, which is added as a document linked to the front webpage of the newspaper, and the use of subtitles in the news video. The audiovisual translation presented here shows how the journalistic need of reporting breaking news urgently clashes with a lack of planned responses to sourcing translators.

*Figure 3.* Translation in the spotlight *(http://video.repubblica.it/home)*



From the point of view of audiovisual translation, the example shows how there is no visible concern with current, minimum standards of subtitling quality as accepted in the industry in Italy (see *Figure 3*: no respect of syntax, with all subtitles starting with a capital letter, no respect of the characters expected in Italian (39–42), plus the spotting of the whole video appears to be mechanical and never checked by a subtitler). Little doubt exists that the spotting and the subtitling of the news video were not carried out by a professional subtitler. The time constraints do not justify the quality of the AVT. The use of the hybrid written and AVT translation confirms a form of reticence, from those who used to be the journalists of *carta stampata* [paper press], to trust the multimodal messages of AVT. The journalists' choices seem to register a total absence of concerns regarding using more habitual AVT modes, such as dubbing and subtitling. The journalists' choices seem to be underpinned by a sense of protection towards the newspapers' legal position (possibly deciding to acknowledge implicitly the use of a written translation to generate the subtitles). Furthermore, their belief in the superior clarity of the written word seems to be implicit in the equal level of visibility given to both the link to the video and to the translation on the opening page of the newspaper. The translation had clearly news value per se; its textual component visually equal to the video component; yet the response to the urgency of publication seems to be non-dissimilar to the collectivist and interventionist approach of informal, alternative, and anti-establishment translators – described in Perez Gonzalez.

*Figure 4.* Breaking subtitles rules. *(http://video.repubblica.it/home)*



## 4.2  Subtitles on rolling texts

In the aftermath of the terrorist attack of 22 March 2016 on Brussels Zaventem Airport in Belgium, Italian daily newspapers activated a number of different approaches to news reporting from Belgium.

Many newspapers, especially the three most-widely read national newspapers activated forms of live-feeds (tv.com journalism) for broadcasting either with speaking head journalists who work as their regular foreign correspondent for the written news items, or with live feeds from online broadcasts of TV news broadcasts from Belgian TV channels. In *Figure 5* it is possible to see a snapshot of the activity by *Corriere.it* that activated a form of subtitles on the rolling titles and the oral speech conveyed live (*diretta* at the top right corner of the snapshot) by RTL. The use of block capital black letters on a white background could be interpreted as a way of mimicking the register of RTL's own rolling titles or an attempt to maximize the visibility of the text in the multiple frames within which it was embedded. The subtitles appeared for several seconds (more than 15) on screen and respected some conventions of subtitling, whilst they could have used a re-speaking system.

*Figure 5.  Live-feed from RTL TV*



## 4.3  Voice-over and written translation

*Figure 6.*  La Stampa.it *video interview of survivor to the Brussels attacks on 22 March 2016.*

*LaStampa* adopted a number of AVT modes in order to report on the 22 March terrorist attack. In *Figure 6*, the dramatic interview captured after the bombing in Zaventem Airport was uploaded on *LaStampa* using both a voice-over of the French original and a verbatim translation of the voiceover as a long caption. These clips appeared regularly during the hours following the terrorist attack on the international airport. Italian online newspapers were using different audiovisual materials – including live video broadcasts of their journalists from Brussels – to keep their readers informed of the events as they unfolded. Among the numbers of AVT modes of providing their journalistic services to Italian audiences, *LaStampa* used one mode that is rarely used in the Italian context, besides forms of live interpreting, which is the voice-over technique. It is possible to interpret the unnecessary addition of the translation in the position of a caption as a testament to the unusual use of the voice-over mode that needed to be compensated by means of text. It could also be evidence of the predominance of 'written' texts in the extensively multimodal world of hypertext, discussed with reference to the text-heavy Italian website in Tavosanis (2011). In both interpretations, it is evident that the multimodal context enables the online version to adopt a lesser used AVT mode and complement it with the security of the written word. The resulting choice does not hide the ideational power of discourse: the written word, especially when translating materials from a different language, seems to be perceived as more powerful than its oral version, be it a translation or not. This interpretation may be slightly extreme, but the evidence in the news videos suggest that Tavosanis's work on text-dense multimodal communication (2011) as well as Loporcaro's work on Italian news (2006) converge on one issue: Italian journalists *della carta stampata* [of the paper press] may be writing on a different medium, but they still consider themselves more importantly as producers of written texts on paper (be it digital or real paper).

## 4.4  Rolling subtitles

*Figure 7.  RepTV, use of rolling subtitles*



One last illustration of the variety of the AVT modes used in online Italian news-papers comes from the US presidential debate of October 2016. *Figure 7* shows the use of rolling subtitles that moved from the right to the left of the screen to enable left-to-right reading. In this snapshot, there is the example of how *Repubblica.it* reported one of the events surrounding the US presidential elections of 2016. In October 2016, the Republican candidate Donald Trump was in the spotlight for a leaked 2005 conversation recorded between Trump and Billy Bush, whilst they were shooting a segment on the set of *Days of Our Lives*, in which Trump endorsed sexual harassment as a privilege of wealthy individuals, and referred to a 'mar-ried woman' who had refused his aggressive approaches. On Friday 7 October, it was revealed that the bluntly objectified woman in the recorded conversation between Mr Trump and Mr Bush was entertainment journalist Nancy O'Dell, who co-hosted Access Hollywood with Mr Bush at the time. Brought into the contro-versy, which made news worldwide, Mrs O'Dell issued a statement on 8 October and later a 50-second opening to the *Entertainment Tonight* broadcast, which was picked up by *RepTv* – of *laRepubblica.it* – and translated. The medium used is not that of standard subtitles but that of news rolling subheadings, moving from right to the left of the screen. They represent a verbatim rendering of O'Dell's statement and do not take into account reading speed or any such notions as the 7-second rule for subtitling. The text is to the letter but its readability is highly compromised

by the medium chosen. To attract the readers' attention, the right-side panel of the screen as shown in *Figure 7* above offers a synopsis of the statement. O'Dell is listing women's right to be recognized for their skills and capabilities, including 'intelligence', which the snapshot above shows is present in the rolling subtitles but not in the summary in the right, which is rather confusing as the core message of this political and public relation crisis was relevant to the debate about the election as well as to the ongoing Italian debate on gender equality.

## Conclusions

The sample shows an ongoing process of swift adaptation of new AVT modes to respond to the growth of accompanying news videos to written online news items. This is a significant journalistic phenomenon recorded in digital versions of traditional daily press. Although the sample discussed here is undeniably too small to use for generalisations, the typologies of modes presented show a complex multimodal tendency in representing foreign events by mixed AVT modes. The sudden visibility of alternative AVT modes seem to respond to the need for urgency in reporting breaking news in crises; these modes may also challenge readers (who are transformed into viewers in online news). Indeed, the study of the viewers' responses and reactions to the messages is the next stage to understand what, if any, emotional impact the transfer of these type of crisis messages has on general audiences. In terms of audiences, the counters for the news videos in the examples here discussed seem to indicate that even among the many potential readers of the main national newspapers (expressed in averages of millions in the Audipress reports), the readers/viewers interested in translated news videos represented small percentages of the audience, ranging between 1.5% and 3% of the overall potential number of readers. Also, the counters did not seem to distinguish unique hits from repeated hits, so the real figures may even be lower. The issue as to whether news videos are successful mechanisms to regain some readers in for traditional press outlets in their digital format may need to be considered from the perspective of journalism studies and translation studies alike. It may be possible that the introduction of news videos, leading to additional choice of format for news items in the digital press, does not entail an automatic endorsement and adoption of these new contents. From the point of view of AVT, this consideration should lead researchers to test whether the unusual modes, or the quality issues in the rendering of the news videos, could act as obstacles to their spread and reach among the potential audiences.

The phenomenon here introduced deserves further analysis. The shifts described in selecting lesser common AVT modes as journalistic responses to

emerging crises that need immediate reporting result from the textual hybridity which is prevailing, even though the hybrid messages still considerably rely on written signs for translations. The translatorial shifts in the news videos do not occur out of disregard for professional competence (not employing professional translators) nor out of disinterest towards offering a translation output of quality – at least, it can be certainly argued that these are not the only reasons. Equally, these shifts are highly visible and cannot be simplistically connected to the crisis constraints: even if technology allows for immediate voice-over or rolling titles, when these are accompanied by written texts, there is a duplication of work, any efficiency rule that would dismiss repetitive or dispersive translation efforts in favour of supporting approaches that would help journalists to ensure high quality of rendering in the limited time available seem to be overlooked. The increased use of unusual and hybrid AVT modes suggests that the necessity of accommodating a foreign message that comes from far away within the tribal boundaries of Italian journalistic discourse may prevail over concerns on quality of rendering. The phenomenon could also be interpreted as a recognition that translations of news happen, they are visible, and their shortcoming are of secondary importance, compared to the journalistic priority of giving immediate access to foreign news items.

It is true to say though that the phenomenon also shows many signs of the resilience of old journalistic means (the written word) in the context of online news, for which visible textual signs can hide and add confusion on the video message because ultimately the verbal sign is journalistically perceived as more powerful. The translations and examples discussed here show the specificity of the Italian phenomenon, as the need to make discourse close to home and relevant to the Italian readers is twice as marked than in other journalistic traditions. There is equally the need to remember that similar phenomena happen in most European broadcasting systems in which the local, national multilingualism create different target audiences. Undeniably, the universal growth of the use of news videos in daily online press needs to be studied from a translatorial point of view, as the representation of emergencies and sudden crises is not only a humanitarian concern, but it is a growing political concern because it engenders automatic and populistic responses to what is foreign, when the visible translation hinders or simplifies the complexity of the foreign message.

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# Media accessibility in the Czech Republic

**Abstract:** Media accessibility is a field of ever-growing importance in AVT research. Extensive studies in this area exist throughout Europe. However, in the Czech Republic, such research is missing. The present paper, therefore, strives to fill the niche and present the current situation in the Czech Republic regarding the accessibility of television broadcasting to people with a visual or hearing disability. It introduces the existing regulations governing media accessibility in television broadcasting in the Czech Republic, namely the Broadcasting Act, and compliance with the Act. The purpose of this paper is to answer the question of whether and how regulations governing media accessibility are met within the Czech Republic, and whether and how their compliance is monitored, supervised and enforced. In doing so, the paper refers not only to the existing regulations but also to the annual reports of the competent regulatory authority. Data for 2013–2015 are analysed to illustrate the development of television broadcasting accessibility and related issues.

## 1. Introduction

In this paper, I would like to address the issue of media accessibility in the Czech Republic, more specifically the accessibility of television broadcasting. Media accessibility is a widely discussed and researched topic in the field of audiovisual translation (AVT) as demonstrated by the papers presented not only at the *Intermedia* conference in 2016 but also at other AVT conferences such as *Media for All* or *The Languages and the Media*. The amount of research is extensive in the world and Europe in particular. However, media accessibility in the Czech context is a substantially under-researched area. This paper, therefore, strives to lay some groundwork for research in this area in the Czech Republic. Its aim is to describe the current situation concerning accessibility in television broadcasting. First, the paper will give an overview of regulations governing television broadcasting accessibility in the Czech Republic. The main part of the paper presents the amount of TV broadcasting that is made accessible to the visually and hearing impaired audience. The data is based on annual reports of the Council for Radio and Television Broadcasting from 2013–2015. The paper also points out some problematic issues that are related to television broadcasting accessibility and its enforcement.

## 2. Why media accessibility?

Before analysing the situation in the Czech Republic, let us first look at some numbers and the conventions and regulations concerning media accessibility. According to the World Health Organization's (WHO) data from March 2015, there are 360 million people worldwide with "disabling hearing loss". Which amounts to over 5% of the world's population (WHO 2015) and the number of visually impaired people worldwide is estimated at 285 million as of August 2014 (WHO 2014). As for the Czech population, it is estimated that there are one million people with hearing impairment, which is 10% of the Czech population (Hrubý 2009) and the number of visually impaired people in the Czech Republic is estimated at 60,000–100,000 (SONS ČR 1998). Even though these are estimates and not proper statistics, the numbers are significant, and the need for accessible media services is urgent.

In 2006 the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which was signed by the Czech Republic in 2007 and came into force in 2008. To this day the Convention has 160 signatories and 166 parties. It is the first international treaty specifically to determine the rights of persons with disabilities and the corresponding duties of the contracting states. It also promotes equal human rights to people with disabilities who are viewed as full and equal members of society. Among other things Article 30 of the Convention states:

> States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to take part on an equal basis with others in cultural life, and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities:
>
> (a) Enjoy access to cultural materials in accessible formats;
> (b) Enjoy access to television programmes, films, theatre and other cultural activities, in accessible formats;
> (c) Enjoy access to places for cultural performances or services, such as theatres, museums, cinemas, libraries and tourism services, and, as far as possible, enjoy access to monuments and sites of national cultural importance.
>
> (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 30, Section 1)

The European Union as one of the parties to the Convention also promotes equal access to cultural and social values for all EU citizens. The Audiovisual Media Services Directive (2010/13/EU) states:

> Preamble, Section 46:
> The right of persons with a disability and of the elderly to participate and be integrated in the social and cultural life of the Union is inextricably linked to the provision of accessible audiovisual media services. The means to achieve accessibility should include, but need

*not be limited to, sign language, subtitling, audio-description and easily understandable*
*menu navigation.*
*[…]*
*Article 7:*
*Member States shall encourage media service providers under their jurisdiction to ensure*
*that their services are gradually made accessible to people with a visual or hearing disability.*

<div align="right">(2010/13/EU)</div>

It is evident that the Directive even specifies the use of sign language, subtitling and audio description as tools for making the media accessible to the visually and hearing impaired. It, however, does not say how or in what amounts should the Member States implement this Directive, it only states that media services should be "gradually made accessible".

The Audiovisual Media Services Directive was implemented into Czech law in 2011, in the amended Act on Radio and Television Broadcasting (Act No. 231/2001) which requires public and private television broadcasters to make specific percentage of their programmes accessible to the visually and hearing impaired audience, specifically:

*A nation-wide licensed television broadcaster shall provide hidden or open captions for the*
*hard of hearing in at least 15% of the programme units it broadcasts, and make at least 2%*
*of the programme units accessible to visually impaired persons. A nation-wide statutory*
*television broadcaster shall provide hidden or open captions for the hard of hearing in at*
*least 70% of the programme units it broadcasts, and produce at least 2% of the broadcast*
*programme units in the Czech sign language or interpret them into the Czech sign language*
*for the hard of hearing, and make at least 10% of the programme units accessible to visually*
*impaired persons.*

<div align="right">(Act No. 231/2001, Section 32 (2))</div>

It should be stressed, that for the purpose of this paper, we are working with the unofficial translation of the Broadcasting Act that is available on the RRTV website. It is important to realise that the Czech wording is less specific than the English translation. It refers to the percentage of programmes broadcast („X % vysílaných pořadů"), this is ambiguous regarding whether it should be calculated from the total number of programme units or their total footage.

## 3.  The Council for Radio and Television Broadcasting (RRTV)

The body that is responsible for the monitoring of television broadcasting and enforcement of the regulation, as mentioned above, is the Council for Radio and Television Broadcasting (RRTV). It monitors television broadcasting in two ways: monitoring by sampling and incentive-based monitoring. Incentive-based

monitoring is based on feedback (usually negative) from the television audience, who can register a complaint, whereby RRTV then investigate the issue. When RRTV monitors by sampling, they contact the broadcaster announcing the monitoring period (ranging from 10 to 13 days) and ask the broadcaster to supply a list of programmes that will be broadcast with subtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing (SDH) or with audio description (AD). Based on the supplied list, RRTV records the programmes broadcast with SDH or AD and then analyse them. The results of monitoring by sampling are summarised in a report, and the broadcaster is then also informed.

Besides monitoring, at the beginning of every calendar year, RRTV invites the broadcasters to supply information on the number of programmes made accessible to the visually and hearing impaired audience in the past year. Even though only operators of nationwide television broadcasting via terrestrial transmitters are subject to the quotas stipulated by the law, RRTV sends this request to all television broadcasters and most of them do send a reply. In the request RRTV asks television broadcasters to supply the following information:

1. The percentage of programmes supplied with closed or open captions for the deaf and hard of hearing (and in the case of Czech Television also the percentage of programmes produced or interpreted in Czech sign language);
2. The percentage of programmes made accessible for the visually impaired (using audio description);
3. The percentage of subtitle/audio described programmes broadcast in a premier;
4. The percentage of subtitle/audio described programmes that belonged to the broadcaster's original drama production.

As for the first two questions regarding the number of programmes broadcast with SDH or AD, in 2013 RRTV asked the television broadcasters to supply data calculated from the number of programme units as well as the footage of the programmes broadcast. However, since 2014 they ask only for the data calculated from the footage of the programmes as this value seems more reasonable, as discussed below. Further, RRTV asks the television broadcasters to give data for each of the programme channels operated by a broadcaster separately and to give the list of programmes supplied with SDH or AD. It is also interesting that RRTV asks about data regarding premieres and original productions which are not determined by law. One might as well wonder why RRTV does not inquire about the amount of closed versus open captions as only closed captions can be regarded as making a programme fully accessible to the hearing impaired audience. That being said, it is important to remember that all the data considering

SDH in the following section include closed as well as open captions. Thus, the data are rather approximate, though it can, however, still illustrate the situation.

The data supplied by the television broadcasters are analysed by RRTV. If a violation of Section 32 (2) of the Broadcasting Act is found, RRTV has several options. They can start the administrative procedure with the broadcaster in which a fine in the amount of 5,000–2,500,000 Czech crowns (approximately 180–92,600 euros) can be imposed, or they can notify the broadcaster of the Act violation and set a rectification period which is usually until the end of the calendar year. The results are also summarised in RRTV's annual report on the accessibility of television broadcasting to the visually and hearing impaired persons.

## 4. TV broadcasting accessibility in numbers

It is arguable whether the quotas for television broadcasting accessibility stipulated in the Broadcasting Act cited above are strict or not. However, the question I would like to answer here is how are the broadcasters fairing in complying with the regulation and quotas. All the information in this section is based on the RRTV annual accessibility reports from 2013 to 2015.[1]

### 4.1 Public broadcaster – Czech Television

In the Czech Republic, the quotas for the nation-wide statutory (hereafter public) television broadcaster are higher than those for nation-wide licensed (hereafter private) television broadcasters. For the deaf and the hard of hearing audience the public television broadcaster, which is Czech Television, should provide subtitles for at least 70% of the programmes broadcast, and produce at least 2% of the programmes in sign language or interpret it into the Czech sign language. They should also make at least 10% of the broadcast programmes accessible to the visually impaired audience. That being said, I would like to point out here that Czech legislation does not specify audio description as a tool for making television broadcasting accessible to the visually impaired. However, RRTV requires that the quota be fulfilled by audio description.

Currently, Czech Television (Česká televize) operates six television channels. ČT1 is the main channel that targets mainstream audiences and families. It offers all television formats and genres from TV news to Czech and foreign films, TV series, entertainment shows and competitions. ČT2 aims to appeal to a more

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1    These reports can be accessed form RRTV on the basis of Act No. 106/1999 Coll., on Free Access to Information.

demanding audience with programmes about culture, educational programmes and documentaries. ČT24 is a news channel broadcasting 24 hours a day focusing mainly on TV reporting and journalism. ČT sport broadcasts live sports events and other sports-related programmes. ČT :D targets child audiences with children's programmes including educational ones. The last one is ČT art, which focuses on cultural topics and formats, art films, classical music, etc. ČT :D and ČT art only began broadcasting on 31st August 2013 and share broadcasting frequency. ČT :D broadcasts from 6 am to 8 pm, and from 8 pm to 2 am is the broadcasting time of ČT art.

*Table 1. Czech Television broadcasting accessibility in 2013*

| ČT 2013 | SDH (70%) | | Sign language (2%) | | Programmes suitable for the visually impaired (10%) | | AD (10%) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | unit | footage | unit | footage | unit | footage | unit | footage |
| ČT1 | 90.4% | 80.2% | 2.9% | 4.3% | 32.9% | 26.4% | 11.5% | 10.2% |
| ČT2 | 86.7% | 83.8% | 4.8% | 1.8% | 20.0% | 19.9% | 5.3% | 4.5% |
| ČT24 | 72.1% | 55.3% | 3.5% | 2.5% | 27.4% | 28.5% | 6.1% | 3.7% |
| ČT sport | 35.4% | 16.8% | 2.3% | 1.4% | 77.1% | 84.7% | 7.9% | 4.0% |
| ČT :D | 71.5% | 74.0% | 1.4% | 1.2% | 14.1% | 9.5% | 13.5% | 9.0% |
| ČT art | 56.6% | 62.9% | 8.3% | 5.5% | 33.7% | 35.7% | 14.8% | 11.4% |

Czech Television belongs to the few television broadcasters that every year supply all the data required by RRTV, that is for each of their channels separately they provide two sets of data, one based on the number of programme units, and the other based on the footage of the programmes. Interestingly, for 2015 Czech television supplied only values based on the number of programme units despite the fact that RRTV asked specifically only for values based on the footage of the programmes. The difference between those values may be quite substantial and in some cases make a difference between fulfilling and not fulfilling the quota required by the law, as shown in Table 1 above where all the values below the quota are marked in red. The most striking difference in the values can be seen in the case of ČT24 (72.1% vs. 55.3%) and ČT sport (35.4% vs. 16.8%) almost by a quarter and a half respectively. What this data shows is that in order to fulfil the quota requirement, the broadcaster subtitles many short programme units such as brief news reports. However, as the wording of the Broadcasting Act does not specify how the percentage is to be calculated, RRTV always meets the

broadcasters halfway and takes the value that is more favourable for the broadcaster as the basis of the decision on whether or not the quota has been fulfilled.

Table 1 also shows technical unpreparedness of the broadcaster for transmitting audio description as Czech Television finished testing the technological possibilities for transmitting AD in mid-2013 and could start broadcasting standard AD only after that. However, from 2014 on, Czech Television has almost no problems fulfilling the quota for AD as can be seen in Table 2 and Table 3 below.

*Table 2. Czech Television broadcasting accessibility in 2014*

| ČT 2014 | SDH (70%) | | Sign language (2%) | | Programmes suitable for the visually impaired (10%) | | AD (10%) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | unit | footage | unit | footage | unit | footage | unit | footage |
| ČT1 | 92.8% | 80.3% | 3.3% | 4.1% | 44.8% | 38.7% | 24.6% | 20.5% |
| ČT2 | 86.9% | 82.4% | 5.1% | 2.1% | 26.8% | 23.0% | 14.4% | 8.8% |
| ČT24 | 70.9% | 55.7% | 3.9% | 1.9% | 34.3% | 34.6% | 15.9% | 9.2% |
| ČT sport | 43.6% | 29.6% | 3% | 1.5% | 84.0% | 85.9% | 14.4% | 7.3% |
| ČT :D | 72.3% | 78.1% | 2.1% | 1.5% | 11.6% | 9.5% | 10.3% | 7.4% |
| ČT art | 68% | 68.7% | 3.0% | 2.4% | 24.5% | 22.5% | 13.2% | 8.0% |
| OVERALL | 73.2% | 64.4% | 3.4% | 2.4% | 37.2% | 39.8% | 15.5% | 10.7% |

In Table 1 and Table 2 we can see a significant failure to fulfil the SDH quota on ČT sport with 35.4% and 43.6% respectively. These low values are explained by the fact that this channel broadcasts many sports events live, which poses some technical challenges as these live events need to be subtitled live. Czech Television is cooperating with the University of West Bohemia on developing software that would make live subtitling in Czech more efficient (Vaverková 2012), which can be more problematic than in English, for instance, due to inflections. Even though the quota for SDH was not fulfilled on ČT sport even in 2015 (see Table 3), there is a significant increase of SDH, from 35.4% in 2013 to almost twice as much (67.3%) in 2015.

*Table 3.  Czech Television broadcasting accessibility in 2015*

| ČT 2015 | SDH (70%) | Sign language (2%) | Programmes suitable for the visually impaired | AD (10%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | unit | unit | unit | unit |
| ČT1 | 93.9% | 3.3% | 44.3% | 26.4% |
| ČT2 | 89.5% | 6.3% | 25.8% | 16.9% |
| ČT24 | 72.2% | 3.9% | 34.1% | 16.1% |
| ČT sport | **67.3%** | 2.9% | 85.8% | 11.5% |
| ČT :D | 77.3% | 2.6% | 10.0% | **8.8%** |
| ČT art | 83.3% | 3.6% | 27.8% | 17.6% |
| **OVERALL** | **79.7%** | **3.7%** | **36.7%** | **15.7%** |

It is interesting to note that despite the fact that in 2014 and 2015 RRTV required data calculated from the total footage of the programmes, in 2015 Czech Television, for an unknown reason, supplied only data based on the number of programme units, even though they had supplied both in the preceding years. Czech Television also supplies data regarding programmes "suitable" for the visually impaired audience, claiming that it makes its programmes accessible not only through AD but also by "purposeful choice of programmes which are by their nature accessible to such audience, i.e. the audio substitutes the visual component to the maximum degree" (RRTV 2014). These values, however, are not considered by RRTV as relevant for fulfilling the quota as the law speaks about "*making* a programme accessible" which requires an active step in the form of audio description.

Overall, we can say that Czech Television is doing a good job in making their programmes accessible to the visually and hearing impaired audience as a vast majority of their channels fulfil the quotas set by the law. From the supplied data, regarding the amount of premieres and original productions being subtitled and audio described, it is also evident that they are not only recycling existing subtitles and ADs but every year are producing new subtitles and ADs so the visually and hearing impaired audience can choose from a relatively wide range of programmes.

## 4.2  Private broadcasters

It is clear that Czech Television sets quite a good example for the other broadcasters regarding media accessibility. However, the majority of private broadcasters are not as cooperative with RRTV as Czech Television is, and they very often rely on the vague wording of the Broadcasting Act regarding broadcasting accessibility failing

to supply even all the data required by RRTV. The two biggest private television broadcasters, CET 21 and FTV Prima belong to this group.

CET 21 operates five channels that are subject to the media accessibility quotas. Nova is the main channel targeting the mainstream audience; Nova Cinema is a film channel; Fanda targets male audiences with action, sci-fi films, series, and sports programmes; Smíchov is a comedy channel; and Telka is an archive channel that broadcasts older films and series.

Even though RRTV requires data for all channels operated by the broadcaster separately, each year CET 21 submitted overall values for all its channels put together. Because of the vagueness of the wording of the regulation, there are two competing interpretations of the law: CET 21 and the Association of Television Organizations claim it is legitimate to satisfy the 15% quota on SDH and 2% quota on AD on all the channels operated by one broadcaster put together. On the other hand, RRTV, supported by the Ministry of Culture and associations representing the interests of the hearing and visually impaired (ASNEP and SONS ČR), interprets the law in a different way and insists on data being supplied for each channel (RRTV 2014).

*Table 4.  CET 21 broadcasting accessibility calculated from the total footage*

| CET 21 | SDH (15%) | | | AD (2%) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | total | premiers | orig. prod. | total | premiers | orig. prod. |
| 2013 | 18.7% | 19.6% | 28.2% | 2.6% | 59% | 77% |
| 2014 | 17.3% | 12.2% | 39.9% | 3.65% | 40% | 84% |
| 2015 | 19.73% | 14.82% | 39.35% | 4.03% | 36% | 85% |

Despite RRTV's effort to gain more detailed data from CET 21, the broadcaster refuses, or perhaps is unable, to supply this data. That is why RRTV was forced to stop the administrative procedure against this broadcaster in 2014 for lack of evidence that would prove a violation of the law, and since then the situation is deadlocked. Until the Broadcasting Act is amended, which should be in the autumn of 2016, RRTV has no way to know whether the quotas have been fulfilled on all channels of this broadcaster. It is, however, reasonable to assume that they are not. During the monitoring by sampling in 2013 and 2014, the broadcaster even admitted that it broadcasts audio described programmes only on Nova, which is the mainstream channel, arguing they want to offer the visually impaired audience programmes with higher viewer ratings, which are presumably more popular with the mainstream audience (RRTV 2013).

Similar issues arise when it comes to the second biggest private broadcaster FTV Prima. This broadcaster operates five channels that are subject to the media accessibility quotas. Prima is the mainstream channel; Prima COOL targets young audiences aged 15–40 mainly with American series and reality shows; Prima LOVE focuses on American as well as original series and American talent shows; Prima ZOOM is a documentary channel; and Prima MAX, launched in November 2015, focuses mainly on foreign film productions.

The same issues we discussed with CET 21, whether the quota applies to individual channels separately or for all the channels overall, arise with this broadcaster as well. FTV Prima not only does not supply more detailed data regarding accessibility on individual channels, but they also fail to provide data regarding premieres and original productions either, nor the list of programmes that were made accessible. It is again reasonable to assume the quotas are not fulfilled on all their channels.

*Table 5.  FTV Prima broadcasting accessibility*

| FTV Prima | SDH (15%) | AD (2%) | Programmes suitable for the visually impaired |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2013 | 18.99% | 2.27% | 4.42% |
| 2014 | 19.23% | 3.76% | 6% |
| 2015 | 22.31% | 3.95% | 5.41% |

Until 2015 Barrandov Televizní Studio operated only one nation-wide television channel called TV Barrandov with Czech and Czechoslovak films and series, entertainment shows and soap operas. In April 2015 it launched another channel Kino Barrandov offering European film production of different genres, and in May 2015 another channel was launched called Barrandov Plus, which is a combined channel targeting the youngest audience in the morning and afternoon time, and offering documentaries in the evening.

*Table 6.  TV Barrandov broadcasting accessibility*

| TV Barrandov | SDH (15%) | AD (2%) |
|---|---|---|
| 2013 | 32.61% | 2.93% |
| 2014 | 47.99% | 2.58% |
| 2015 | 42.29% | 3.01% |

This broadcaster stands out among the other private broadcasters with the amount of SDH which significantly surpasses the 15% quota required by the law. Even the

new channels, Kino Barrandov and Barrandov Plus that were launched during 2015 provided subtitles to 38.3% and 16.6% of their programmes respectively. This broadcaster also regularly supplies a complete list of programmes that were made accessible using subtitles and audio description. It is also the only broadcaster that claims explicitly that the data given for SDH specifically concerns closed captions. With the other broadcasters, we do not know what percentage of their programmes was actually made accessible to the hearing impaired audience as they can include open captions as well in the values.

The only issue that arises with this broadcaster is the broadcasting time of programmes with audio description. During monitoring by sampling in December 2013 and April 2015, it was found that most of the audio described programmes were broadcast around 3 am, which is not a very audience-friendly broadcasting time.

There are two more private television broadcasters subject to the regulation concerning broadcasting accessibility: Regionální televize CZ and TP Pohoda; each of them operating one nation-wide channel. Regionální televize is a news reporting channel focusing on regional news. For 2013 the broadcaster did not provide any data claiming that since the news reports are commented, and they are broadcast with written comments and transcriptions, they are suitable for the visually and hearing impaired respectively. However, after being notified by RRTV that they still need to provide subtitles and audio description to comply with the legal requirement they supplied the data in Table 7. It must be stressed, however, that the values for SDH include subtitles as well as videotext and programs without commentary, so the real figure for SDH remains unknown but will probably be well below the quota.

*Table 7. Regionální televize CZ broadcasting accessibility*

| Regionální televize | SDH (15%) | AD (2%) |
|---|---|---|
| 2013 | N/A | N/A |
| 2014 | 16.7% | 27.1% |
| 2015 | 21.14% | 43.9% |

TP Pohoda operates a channel called Relax focusing on lifestyle and music programmes as well as foreign series and soap operas. The data supplied by this broadcaster appears to fulfil the quota without any problems; it is, however, not clear how these values were calculated as they seem to be the percentages of premieres supplied with SDH and AD rather than of the total amount of the broadcast programmes (RRTV 2015a).

*Table 8.  TP Pohoda broadcasting accessibility*

| TP Pohoda | SDH (15%) | AD (2%) |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| 2013 | 24.6% | 2.4% |
| 2014 | 16.9% | 2.8% |
| 2015 | 18.5% | 3.1% |

## 5.  Level playing field?

In this section, I would like to comment on the issue of making music programmes accessible to the visually and hearing impaired. When it comes to music channels, it seems a bit unreasonable to demand the same amount of accessibility tools as with other private television broadcasters. However, the law does not set any special conditions for music channels and sets the same criteria to all private broadcasters. It is no wonder then that both broadcasters operating nation-wide music channels are struggling to comply with the broadcasting accessibility quotas.

Stanice O operates three music channels: Óčko, Óčko Expres, and Óčko Gold. In 2013, the broadcaster wrongly assumed that the obligation to provide SDH and AD did not apply to them so did not provide any data. In 2014 and 2015, the broadcaster declared that no AD was present in their broadcasting due to the lack of silent spots, and provided a list of programmes with subtitles. These were five songbooks, which are subtitled music videos, and five lyric videos, where the lyrics are integrated into the music clip, repeated many times.

The other broadcaster is Digital Broadcasting operating the music channel Rebel (formerly known as Retro). For 2013 and 2014 the broadcaster did not supply any data. For 2015, they claim to have subtitled 41.2% of their programmes and audio described 5.8%.

Even though RRTV understands the plight of these broadcasters, it still requires them to fulfil the quotas as set by the law. On the other hand, in the annual reports RRTV points out that these broadcasters could at least supply SDH and AD to hosted programmes and shows as it is more reasonable to subtitle and audio describe such programmes than music videos. Music videos cannot be fully appreciated by the hearing impaired, even with subtitles, as the principal value of these programmes lies in the music which cannot be made accessible through subtitles. As for the visually impaired audience, it is reasonable to assume that they use these programmes as a substitute for radio broadcasting, and inserting audio description into music videos does not make them more accessible, rather the contrary. The situation of music channels will also be hopefully solved by the new amendment to the Broadcasting Act.

## 6. Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to describe the current situation in television broadcasting accessibility in the Czech Republic. The data and findings provided here showed not only the amount of television broadcasting that is being made accessible to the visually and hearing impaired but more importantly it revealed some serious flaws in the legislation that is supposed to guarantee the accessibility of television broadcasting.

The first flaw, not explicitly mentioned so far but nevertheless inherently present, is the fact that television broadcasters are not obliged to archive the programmes with SDH or AD, neither do they have to archive data about them. The fact that the broadcasters provide these data to the RRTV is to some degree a token of goodwill on their side. Another aspect of the lack of obligation to archive the subtitled and audio described programmes is the fact that RRTV cannot verify whether the data supplied by the broadcasters correspond with the reality.

Another problem is that the period in which the quotas need to be fulfilled is not specified. As Hušková (2015) points out, the longer the period, the greater the risk of seasonal accumulation. She also claims that most broadcasters repeat the programme units several times to fulfil the formal requirements, however, the needs of the visually and hearing impaired audience are not satisfied.

The law does not specify either whether the quotas are to be fulfilled at each channel operated by the broadcaster separately or together as an overall value. Hušková (2015) again points out that fulfilling the requirements only in one of the broadcaster's channels can be considered discriminatory as the visually and hearing impaired audience have a less varied programme offer. It is also not clear whether the percentage of the programmes made accessible is to be calculated from the number of programme units or their total footage, which seems more reasonable from RRTV's point of view.

A further serious issue is that the Broadcasting Act does not define SDH and AD properly. It does not distinguish between open and closed captions even though open subtitles are not an adequate accessibility tool for the hearing impaired audience. Very often the broadcasters provide inaccurate data that include not only SDH (also sign language in the case of Czech Television) and AD, considered the only appropriate accessibility tools in television broadcasting for the visually and hearing impaired audience.

Another issue that needs to be resolved in the new amendment to the Broadcasting Act is the requirement of the same percentage of programmes with SDH and AD from all the nationwide private television broadcasters, including music channels where AD is not always desirable.

Hušková (2015) also points out the issue of quality of SDH and AD as no quality requirements are stipulated in the Broadcasting Act, which in her words leads to unsatisfactory results both in SDH and AD. It is apparent that the issue of quality of SDH and AD in television broadcasting would deserve further research.

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# Power, society and AVT in Turkey: an overview

**Abstract:** The article relates the findings of an ongoing research project that encompasses several decades of AVT in Turkey. Drawing a matrix of relations and interactions between types of AVT (i.e. subtitling, dubbing, remakes, adaptations) and practices (i.e. censoring, choice of AV products) and the political as well as social realities and aspirations of certain periods, the aim is to provide a historical trajectory of AVT to exemplify the specific use of certain types of AVT in line with societal and political aspirations and developments. Limited by the length of an article and the inability to provide AV material in printed format, the article provides an overview of the major eras of AVT and the political and societal shifts that necessitated or brought about changes to the AVT scene in the decades studied.

## 1. Introduction

The discussion of issues such as the use of different types of AVT for specific purposes (i.e. localized adaptations of foreign AV products for building a national identity, dubbing with the standard dialect to support language standardization and learning, providing information flow and familiarity with foreign cultures through subtitling), social and political policies that influence AVT (i.e. tax reductions in films imports, foreign/domestic productions, audience viewing rates, censorship organs), power play (i.e. state led AV sector, elitist, ideological, and populist AV productions and translations), actors (i.e. governments, foreign firms and agreements) and technologies (i.e. dubbing, subtitling) are all of interest to the AVT researcher. Following the trajectory of the audiovisual sector[1] and AVT in Turkey, there is evidence to suggest different types of AVT, in line with the realities of certain eras, may be used in line with social and political aspirations.

Many issues, events and subjects have to be considered in providing an overview of the AVT scene in Turkey; but three are of central importance. In order to draw a matrix of interrelations between politics, society and AVT, the realities of Turkey at certain times become significant in conjunction with the types of AVT that are produced. In line with this notion, the limitation of the scope of AVT to "AVT proper" (i.e. subtitling, dubbing, voice over) would defeat the purpose of

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1    Audiovisual sector in this study is limited to include translations for cinema, DVD, and television.

the study. The aim is not to outline AVT proper practices, but to provide a picture of the myriad of possibilities of the transfer of the images and sounds and the ideas inherent in AV products across cultures (which, as will be explained, was the reason behind the use of AVT in the first place in Turkey) and the use of each type in conjunction with the country's realities. Thus, the study includes all types of AVT from the current subtitled products to the initial dubbed products and remakes (as defined by Evans 2014, 300–304) and adaptations (as defined in Lavigne 2014, Moran 1998), as a realistic view of the trajectory of AVT in Turkey necessitates this larger perspective.

Secondly, the artistic, societal, linguistic and cultural limitations and the opportunities presented by the use of certain types of AVT also need to be considered. This point ties in with the ideas aptly summarized by Gottlieb (2005, 13), where he explains that certain types of AVT lead to different impacts on target audiences. He analyses different types of production across factors such as affordability, semiotic authenticity, dialogue authenticity, content mediation, access to original, foreign culture mediation, foreign language training, literacy training, domestic language boosting, linguistic integrity. Stemming from the same perspective, for the purpose of the research, it is apparent that types of AVT such as subtitling allows for access to the original, whereas, for example, adaptations and remakes fall on the localization part of the spectrum hinging on the notion that certain types of AVT allow for easier manipulation or more filtering in the transfer of AV products across cultures (i.e. censoring, recreation, filtering etc.) than others[2].

Thirdly, the importance of the AV sector and AVT in particular for the cultivation, education, etc. of society in Turkey needs to be considered. The research by experts in media, politics, sociology, communication studies has been accentuating the importance of AV products and AVT for the cultivation of Turkish society for over half a century (for examples of listing of such research see: Gül 2009; Kejanlıoğlu 2001; Oskay 1971; Mete 1992). This ties in with the role of translation within a society, and the present day repertoire (both old and new) of translated

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2    It is not the intention of the author to imply that dubbing equates with censoring or subtitling allows for a faithful rendition of an AV product as that would depend largely on the translation practice; but, the idea exemplified in detail when relevant in the study is that some types of AVT make the "filtering in the transference of AV products across cultures" simpler and more effective. The use of the notion of filtering implies various changes to AV products including censoring of dialogues, to cutting out scenes, to reformulation of the visual to suit target culture norms. The term "appropriation" may also be used.

AV products which are also very important in analyzing the formulation and importance of AVT in a given country.

## 2. The position of translation in general in Turkey and the AVT scene

Proclaimed in 1923, the Republic of Turkey with Westernization at the center of its aspirations, aimed to mold a new identity that would be established on the basis of a new common culture (Güvenç 1997:225). The elite wished to integrate Western civilization through a transfer of certain repertoire and build on this to produce a model of a unique nation.

Thus, translation from European sources played a highly distinctive role in the shaping of modern Turkish culture in the twentieth century (Paker 2002, vii), as it offered a means of creating a new repertoire in a country where the domestic one was regarded as weak and poor (Tahir Gürçağlar 2009, 43). The perceived superiority and continued admiration of Western cultural products led to reliance on 'imports' rather than indigenous creation in the setting up of a sound intellectual infrastructure (Tahir Gürçağlar 2002, 271). In this sense translation was a means to import forms and ideas that would provide a repertoire for Turkish society to achieve its goals (Tahir Gürçağlar 2009, 37).

Furthermore, technical innovations brought about new opportunities for import; for example, studies in Turkey underline that, in the 20th century, cinema and television have contributed to the evolution of Turkish society in a way as to both retain the Turkish identity and also to cultivate it in a certain direction (Aziz 1991, 5). Since the late 1950s cinemas in major cities and the outdoor cinemas set up in small towns and villages alike where used in Turkey to provide the Turkish people with an image of the West they were striving to become a part of. The sounds and images portrayed through this medium would allow the Turkish people to acquaint themselves with the culture of the West, everything from the style of dress, to the music, to the lifestyles and so on. Built on the remnants of a Muslim Empire, the young, impoverished nation had a vision of Westernization with AVT providing a tangible example of this for the masses who had had no historical contact, commonality or shared culture with the West in the sense that Europe or America had (see Tatlı 2015 for full scale study of Turkey's Westernization project through the use of AV and AVT).

The AVT scene of each country will probably contain examples of the fact that the film and program production business assumes an intermediary role between "artistic endeavors as well as both economic considerations and political and ideological constraints" (Meyer Clement 2015, 9). This makes the media powerful tools,

barometers of social, structural and cultural change (Johnson 2001, 147). Many studies have been and are being conducted in Turkey as regards the impact of television and cinema on the cultural, societal, political and other realities with researchers unanimously agreeing on the power of AV products and AVT (some prominent examples of initial research as quoted in Batmaz 1995, 3- Aziz 1984, 1982a, 1982b; Batmaz 1991b, 1986; Oskay 1982; Şanyapılı 1981; Tokgöz 1984, 1979, 1982).

The research summarized below draws a picture of this matrix of relations through several decades of AVT in Turkey.

## 3. The beginning: 1914–1950s

In looking at the economic and social realities, the country had neither the resources nor the accumulation, both artistically and socially, to set up a new cinema sector at the time of its establishment. Thus, it was natural that audiovisual products were translated and transferred to overcome conceived lacks in the Turkish AV repertoire, as AVT allowed the transfer of the culture of the West.

In 1914 the first movie theater, *Ali Efendi Sineması*, established by the Seden brothers, started importing foreign films (Özön 1958), followed shortly by the Pathé cinema which in those days was viewed as the center of cinema in Turkey. These establishments contributed to AVT in that they embraced new ways to translate films. For example, when a gun was fired in a film a prop master would pop a cork to imitate the sound, or when an actor sang in the film a singer was hired to sing in the movie theater (N. Tilgen's unpublished notes as quoted in Scognamillo 2014, 73). In remembering this era one writer states that the same film was shown back to back for days and the copies of the films were bad; all films were reputed to have come from France though this was not the case (Koçu 1972).

Even though there were earlier examples, it was first in the late 1920s and 1930s that cinema, both Turkish and foreign, really 'came to Turkey' and until the establishment of Kemal Film in 1922 the Turkish cinema had been led by official or semi-official state resources. The local cinema scene of the time was composed of the elite who had moved to this genre through theater. Akı (1968) refers to the lack of local resources in the arts at the time and the fact that the Turkish audience would be seeing examples of adaptations until the Turkish cinema developed enough to produce its own prestigious products. The period is full of examples of adaptations of Moliere's plays, Hugo's novels and the like.

Established in 1928, İpek Film, with various movie theaters in İstanbul and İzmir, two major cities in Turkey, continued to import foreign films to Turkish theaters until the 1940's. İpek Film was also the center for the first systemic translations and dubbing practices. Famous Turkish writer Nazım Hikmet was

writing adaptations and translating films for dubbing under pseudonyms. The woman who was referred to as the queen of dubbing Adalet Cimcoz and the king of dubbing, Ferdi Tayfur, worked for the firm, and with their own unique interpretations of the dubbing texts, foreign films were 'localized' (*Turkified*) for domestic consumption (Özgüç 2010, 252). With literacy rates at lower than 10% throughout the era, subtitling was not an option. Neither was it desirable as it would not fully integrate the Western culture into the Turkish setting as it would foreignize the product in that audience would not hear Turkish.

Muhsin Ertuğrul, one of the most criticized founders of Turkish cinema, was also known for his adaptations from foreign sources. Two thirds of his thirty films shot in the 1922–1953 period were adaptations. Enthralled by the works of French and German theater and cinema and Russian cinema, the director was either remaking the plays he had staged in the season for the theater as films, or adapting foreign films for the Turkish audience (Özön 1968). Experts of the era are critical of his works to the extent that they question whether he really contributed to the development of Turkish cinema since all his works were "direct copies" of foreign films (And 1971).

There is evidence also of films translated from the French, German, Austrian and Swedish cinema in which the intertitles were always given in French and Turkish together- this tradition was to continue until the 1940s (Scognamillo 2014, 78)

In 1938–1944 the effects of the war had taken its toll on the cinema sector and the government reduced taxes on entertainment from 75% to 25% to support the sector (Onaran 1994, 102). The number of dubbed American and Egyptian films increased during the war with local productions falling drastically (Özön 1966).

The 1947–1953 period marked the rise of Turkish cinema as a stand-alone sector not solely dependent on translations, but also original local productions (Arpad, 1959). The approximately twenty adaptations of foreign films in the era did contribute to the Turkish cinema in the sense that they enabled new genres to be used; for example an adaptation of Bram Stroker's *Dracula* as *Drakula İstanbul'da* [Dracula in İstanbul] brought a new vision to the Turkish cinema (Scognamillo 2014, 124–125).

In this era which could be referred to as the beginning of AVT, the dominant forms of AVT include replacement and translation of intertitles in the silent movie era and the Turkified[3] dubbing of films with the advent of the talkies, followed by the mainstream adaptations of foreign films that were to give rise to the local AV sector.

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3   "Turkified" is used here in the sense to mean the prominent use of Turkish culture and localization and censoring of storylines and dialogues to make foreign products familiar to the moviegoing public.

## 4. The peak of adaptation: 1960s–1983

The dominance of translations and adaptations from the West had never reached the heights it did in the 1960s period and the following years, definitely at least until 1977 (Scognamillo 2014, 117). Some experts even state that the adaptations referred to in this period were not adaptations in the sense that we think of them today, but cut-copy-paste versions of foreign films with only character and place names being changed (Çetin Erus 2005, 45) and of course the norms portrayed in the films were adapted to the values of Turkish audiences in many cases.

Osman F. Seden, a prominent director and producer, serves as a great example of the realities of the time as he, like many of his colleagues' started making films by translating film dialogue for localized dubbing (Scognamillo 2014, 145).

The Turkish cinema moved into a new era in the 1960s. It was becoming an industry. The economic and political realities of the time guided the Turkish AV and AVT scene in certain directions. On the one hand there were proponents of the Revolutionary Cinema (leftist tendencies), and on the other end of the spectrum proponents of the National Cinema (conservatives) (Kayalı 2015, 31–33), both drawing from the repertoires of Western cinema and adapting foreign films in line with their ideologies.

Economically this period was hard on the Turkish people. Starting with the 1950s the Turkish economy was based on foreign aid and debts. In the 1960s Turkey turned back to economic planning with the establishment of the State Planning Organization. But, with the 1973 oil crises and the 1974 Cyprus issues, political instabilities damaged the improving economy (Erdemir 2007, 162–163).

Politically the 1970s were a decade of great political turbulence in Turkey with anti-systemic armed groups from both ends of the spectrum fighting each other on the streets. On September 12 1980, the military authorities stepped in to end the anarchy (Poulton 1999, 50).

In this period it was as if Turkey was trying to leapfrog (see Knutsson 2012, 183) from falling behind global trends and going through internal political and economic instability into a Western nation in line with the goals set for the nation by policymakers.

The film and cinema sector was a tool at the elite's disposal. In his history of Turkish cinema, Scognamillo (2014, 111) states that the 1960–1986 period was one of unprecedented growth for the sector in Turkey. Özön (1968) marks foreign 'adaptations' as one of the most prominent types of films produced in this era.

Adaptations varied considerably. These can be broadly categorized as follows[4]:

* Close adaptations of Hollywood hits (e.g. *Some like it Hot* (1959) as *Fıstık Gibi Maşallah* [Super Hot!] (1964) by director Hulki Saner).

* Localized adaptations took the characters and stories and placed them as they are in the Turkish setting (*Viva Zapata* (1952) as *Reşo Vatan İçin* [Resho Saves the Nation] (1974) by Çetin İnanç).

* Loose adaptations which used only plot lines and characterization of the original (*The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938) as *Vatan Kurtaran Aslan* [A Lion Who Saved a Nation] (1966) by director Tunç Başaran).

* Religious adaptations (*The Exorcist* (1973) as *Şeytan* [The Devil] (1974) by director Metin Erksan- the symbols of the Christian faith are replaced with those of the Muslim faith.)

* Multiple adaptations of classical films (*The Sheik* (1921) as *Şeyh Ahmed* [Sheik Achmed] by Etem Göreç and *Çöl Kartalı* [Falcon of the Desert] by Hüsnü Cantürk both in 1968).

* Adaptations from cinematic adaptations of literature (*Madame Bovary* as *Seninle Son Defa* [One Last Time] (1978) by Feyzi Tuna- an adaptation of Mme Bovary as a love story; *Don Quixote* as *Don Kişot Sahte Şövalye* [Don Quixote: the Fake Knight] by Semih Evin).

* Adaptations changing the gender of the lead character (*Hamlet* (1948) as *İntikam Meleği Kadın Hamlet* [*The Female Hamlet: An Angel of Revenge*] (1976) by Metin Erksan – an adaptation with Hamlet as a woman).

* Collage adaptations in which two films were used in a single storyline (*Camille* (1936)/ *Irma la douce* (1956) as *Ben Bir Sokak Kadınıyım* [I am a Street Walker] (1966) by Ertem Eğilmez)

* Pseudotranslations of 'hero adventures' (*Captain America* (1944) as *Üç Dev Adam* [Three Giant Men] (1973) by Fikret Uçak- this pseudotranslation includes the Captain, Spiderman and Santo as the other heroes; *Superman* as *Süper Adam Kadınlar Arasında* [Supermen Among Women] (1972) by Cavit Yürüklü- superman is a playboy in this version.)

* Adaptations from comics (*The Phantom* as *Kızılmaske* [Crimson Mask] (1968) by Çetin İnanç – an adaptation of the Lee Falks adventure comic strip)

* Adaptations from TV series (*Flash Gordon* (1936) as *Baytekin Fezada Çarpışanlar* [*Mr. Strong and the Space Fighters*] (1967) by Şinasi Özonuk).

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4   This is not an adaptation experts categorization of the films in question. It is an effort to explain and show the richness of the variety and the types of adapation undertaken.

* Adaptations for children (*The Wizard of Oz* (1951) as *Ayşecik ve Sihirli Cüceler Rüyalar Ülkesinde* [Little Ayşe and the Magical Dwarfs in Wonderland] (1971))
* Pseudotranslations (James Bond films were adapted in 1967 as *Altın Çocuk* [The Golden Boy] *Dehşet Yaratan Adam* [The Man Who Spreads Terror], *Yakut Gözlü Kedi* [The Cat with Emerald Eyes] by Memduh Ün, Nejat Okçugil, İlhan Engin, Nejat Saydam)

Literally hundreds of examples can be added to the list presented above as most classics and Hollywood hits were adapted into Turkish. There were even examples of scenes from original films being cut in to the Turkish versions with for example so-called Turkish Star Wars (*Dünyayı Kurtaran Adam* –[The Man who Saved the World] by Çetin İnanç 1982) where technological battle scenes were 'copied' directly from the original Star Wars movie[5].

In all the types of adaptation referred to above (especially when there is no legislation or penalty) the mediator may establish any sort of link s/he wishes with the original. The degree of faithfulness to the original could range from anything from the use of similar characters, to a localized but faithful rendition in concealed translations. In this sense adaptations are types of AVT which would allow not only a source genre or type of AV product to be integrated into the culture, but would also make the inception of such imports seemingly easy and natural.

One could argue that since the product would be localized there would be little trace of the foreign culture. I would argue that even the use of themes, hitherto unused in the local repertoire, the characters which are drawn from the originals would entail cultural transfer. For example, James Bond films were adapted and set in Istanbul Turkey, but the Bond portrayed carried essences of a foreign culture. In Turkish films of the era studied the national spy was portrayed as poor, honest, hardworking, usually a family man or if not in love with a single woman and physically strong and manly. But, when Bond is the inspiration for the spy in a Turkish adaptation, he becomes a playboy, a daredevil, a suave man of the city, a big spender who likes luxury and so on and so forth.

Another example can be given from the adaptation of the film *Sabrina*. An ugly duckling who happens to have undergone a remarkable change, still harbors feelings for her crush, a rich, carefree playboy; but, his business-focused brother has other plans and intervenes to stop the romance, falling in love with the girl in question. In the adapted version, once the young girl is portrayed as being blinded by the glamour of the younger brother and the older brother only takes a brotherly

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5   This practice has been deragotively referred to as Turksploitation, the Turkish exploitation of foreign films in some instances.

interest in the girl and only later falls in love, the adapters have given the audience the story albeit in an acceptable manner. Themes, such as luring away an innocent young woman, which would have been unacceptable for the Turkish audience of the time, are coaxed into acceptable terms through adaptation.

At this juncture it is important to state that adaptation may have been a necessity and not only a choice as the Turkish cinema, originals, adaptations and translations were heavily censored in the era referred to. The Censorship Law passed in 1939 continued to prevail until 1977. A survey (Cener 1960, 22–23) underlines that the censorship laws in force at the time very strictly limited the content of the productions. For example, according to the statistics of the Municipality of İstanbul in 1960 the number of cinemagoers in İstanbul was 26.885.069 and almost all were watching adapted local productions since only 92 foreign films were approved for viewing by the censorship board (Tikveş 1968). Taxes on foreign imports were also very high. The changes to the censorship law in 1977 brought changes to the cinema scene enabling the police force to enforce censorship in movie theatres (Sanatel 2013). In this sense maybe adaptation was the smoothest transfer of culture possible in the era studied: The essence is relayed, but in a way as to make it acceptable to the viewers and the censorship organs.

Following the Turkish cinema, television initiated cultural transfer through dubbing in the 1969–1983 period with the establishment of a state owned and run television.

## 5. Enter television: 1968, TRT, the state owned television monopoly

The second five year development plan (1966) stressed the use of television for cultivation purposes and underlined the use of television in raising public awareness about the West and supporting Westernization efforts (Oskay 1971, 50). The founding principles of the TRT stated in Article 5. of the 2954 numbered TRT Law are a clear indication of this effort. The TRT is founded to:

1. Ensure that Atatürk's principles and reforms take root in Turkey. That the Turkish nation, in line with national aims, attains the standards of modern civilizations and even surpasses it.
2. In conjuntion with Atatürk's nationalism, embracing democracy, secularism and social legal state principles and in support of human rights, promote the existance and the independance of the state, the territorial integrity of the country, peace within society, national cooperation and justice,
3. Develop national education and culture,

4. Protect the national security policy, national and economic interests of the state
   (http://www.trt.net.tr/kurumsal/YayinIlkelerimiz.aspx).

Television ownership and television itself has always been seen as a great source
of power in Turkey. Ever since the first broadcast on the TRT on January 31 1968
politics, media and social power have gone hand in hand. Colored by political
maneuvering and fights for a chair on the board of TRT in the 1970's, appoint-
ments to critical positions of personnel during military coups, marked by criticism
from political parties, showing a clear orientation towards supporting the policies
of the ruling party, changed through legal amendments to its regulations, Turkish
state television served the Westward cultivation of the people in one direction or
another depending on the political, social climate of the country (see Dedeoğlu
1992).

The ideal was the nation state coexisted completely with the state. In such
a state everyone shared a common culture usually propagated by a centralized
education system (Poulton 1999, 48). This in turn was also propagated with the
use of a centralized state media.

Statistical research shows that the TRT repertoire especially in the 1968–1985
period was composed of foreign programs which were dubbed. A domestic AV
product is defined by TRT as "a production made through the resources of the
TRT, either through cooperation with others or solely through its own resources,"
(TRT 1985, 96). Though there is no definition of what a foreign audiovisual prod-
uct is, foreign productions were either dubbed or (rarely) subtitled on TRT.

According to researchers there were also collages, programs prepared by TRT
in which scenes and parts of foreign productions were used. Cartoons in TV
programs for children, songs and dances in TV entertainment shows, and other
such foreign programs inserted into local productions can be given as examples
(Çankaya 1992, 9).

In children's programs, the texts of the original were changed according to
the norms and the culture of the target audience. Specific examples include the
localization of *The Flintstones, The Vikings* and *The Muppet Show* which were
culturally appropriated in dubbing in line with Turkish audience profiles (Çan-
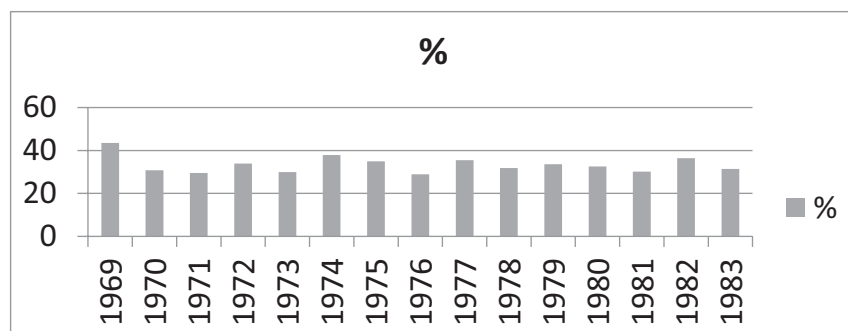kaya 1992, 10).

As is the case in many regions of the world, Turkish audiences also identified
with localized products at the time. As translation scholars have stated, "target
audiences tend to identify with a localized product which has undergone con-
siderable transformations, such as cultural appropriation, narrative manipulation
and censorship," (Balirano 2013, 574).

Writings about the era abound in examples of cultural and social change through television. One such chronicler states that the lifestyles of the Turks had changed as the evenings were reserved for watching television and the images they saw on the screen allowed the Turkish public to acquaint themselves with the world. Tunç (2005, 103) states that it was as if the Turkish people had seen the rest of the world for the first time, having lived in the close confines of their own worlds the images from others came as a welcome surprise. People used to go to houses with television sets to watch television at night. In the era when there was a national curfew and acts of terrorism on the streets, watching television and especially the dubbed series and films was the major form of entertainment (Tunç 2005, 137).

Çankaya (1992, 11) states that the number of foreign programs increased as the technical capabilities of TRT developed. In underlining the importance of foreign programs the researcher states that these products were imported from the West and especially the USA. Foreign productions like Westerns, Sci-Fi, family movies, American musicals, action series, hits like *Dallas* were always aired on prime time with little attention given to local productions.

In a year by year analysis Çankaya presents a list of foreign programs (especially imports from USA, Great Britain, Germany and France) throughout the 1968–1985 period of the TRT. A numerical summary of her analysis is as follows:

*Figure 1. Foreign programs*



The remaining 50% of the shows aired were the news, music literacy programs and the like. In a final assessment Çankaya (1992, 110–111), states that the TRT which was a monopoly in Turkey at the time, served dubbed foreign series and these were always aired on prime time. This policy was embraced to allow the Turkish public to relax at certain hours watching entertainment, increase viewer

rates and was clearly allowing the Turkish public to live in the foreign lives of the rich and famous, empathize with characters and forget their own realities.

Buying foreign productions were cheaper than making domestic productions and series and films injected the foreign cultures of the countries in question (Çankaya 1992, 111).

The same actors and actresses were used in dubbing foreign and domestic films for many years in Turkey and the vocalization traditions (e.g. pitch of voice, tone in expressing feeling, careful standard pronunciation) which were very familiar to the Turkish audience were formed at this time. The stereotypical dubbing formats devised by the first dubbing artists changed very little until the late 1990s. This was also a part of the national language policy in which the many peoples of Turkey from different ethnic, cultural and linguistic origins were taught Standard Turkish at schools. Viewers would hear the same voices, intonation and style in both Turkish and foreign productions. In a documentary dealing with the dubbing practices in the TRT[6] dubbing artists (most of whom are actors of the state theatre and some amateurs) refer to the differences between that era and contemporary dubbing practices. Since until 1995 audiovisual products in Turkey were not filmed on the sound stage, both local and foreign productions were dubbed. Yekta Kopan, a famous dubbing artist, refers to the initial periods of dubbing at the TRT as a collective effort with actors gathering together to practice the scenes in the 1970's. Nuvit Candemir recalls how voice directors were very picky in terms of casting the right voice for the right part. Jeyan Mahfi Ayval Tözüm, whose voice is engraved in the minds of Turkish viewers due to the fact that she spoke a majority of Turkish and foreign leads in her time, refers to the practice of using the same vocalization techniques for multiple actors in different films and series. In another documentary about dubbing[7] in the same period, Uğur Taşdemir, a recruit from the theatre, recalls how he was astounded to hear 'the voices of his childhood' (the older dubbing actors) when he went in for his first dubbing session at the TRT. Though dubbing technology and systems changed for the better in the 1990's, almost all the actors in the documentaries comment on the quality of dubbing at the time and how it was a trade learned through apprenticeship at the TRT.

There were also advantages to the use of dubbing. Whereas one cannot prove whether these reasons played a conscious role in intentionally embracing dubbing as

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6   Seslendirme, dublaj belgeseli: Türkçe Seslendirme http://aykutugur.blogcu.com/
    seslendirme-dublaj-belgeseli-turkce-seslendirme/18023074.

7   Sesin Yüzü – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ax5wvqKYMHo.

the dominant type of AVT, the fact remains that it was embraced and the advantages it gave the mediator to manipulate the AV product were put to full use at the TRT.

The practice of dubbing, since it completely erases the audial channel of the original, makes it much easier to conceal censorship, as well as making it easier to adapt to the norms of the target culture. For example, in cutting a scene out of a film the dialogue and story continuity can be achieved by the addition of a single phrase, or line to the dubbed track. The characters can end up praying to Jesus or Allah as the mediator wishes. Dubbing gives the mediator total control over the audio channel, allowing AV products to be fashioned more freely. In subtitling on the other hand the original is accessible, there are always those who understand the original. Furthermore, in subtitling one cannot erase the paralinguistic features of the audial text which also allow for access to information. For example, the mediator may tone down a lewd remark, but cannot tone down the quality of the voice and the level of sexual innuendo it possesses. In this sense subtitling allows the audience access to the original. Dubbing thus can be widely used in circumstances and channels when products need to be fashioned in line with societal concerns.

There was evidence of heavy censoring in terms of the content of the AV products in the era studied. All films were censored and mediated by TRT officials to "uphold Turkish traditions and norms", products were thus "fashioned on the principles of Turkish modesty and shame, and not in any way harming national feelings" (Tunç 2005, 133).

Television marked the entrance of the rest of the world into the lives of a majority of the Turkish people, especially those living in rural areas. This mass mediation of AV translated products was handled in a way as to allow a smooth passage of the 'other' into the lives of the target viewers. In line with the norms of the society, showing sensitivity where national issues were at stake and keeping in mind that Turkish families watched television together, translated AV products were mediated in a manner as to make them acceptable for family consumption, make them examples of correct behavior for the society at large and make them appealing to the public.

Whereas one cannot prove *exactly* what factors played a role, or whether political and social ideologies played the *central* role in intentionally embracing adaptation and dubbing as the dominant type of AVT at the time exemplified in the study, the fact remains that they were used and the advantages they gave the mediator to manipulate the AV product 'in translation' were put to full use in Turkey's case.

## 6. Enter private TV and subtitling: 1985–2000

Social and political changes in the 1985–2000 period affected the sector deeply. Following the establishment of a new government after the 1980 coup, in 1984 the

Turkish economy opened up to foreign sectors, actors and investment (Kongar 2013, 220). Furthermore, in the post-1980s era researchers emphasize the ongoing struggle of the Turkish nation to unlearn and undo the homogenous, monolithic and absolute ideology adopted by the state's mentality and imposed on the people for the sake of modernization and westernization (Karanfil 2006, 72). All of these lead to a large scale revolution and evolution of the AVT sector in Turkey. In summary, many of the filters were lifted and Turkey was watching relatively uncensored productions in the original, in synch with the rest of the world.

There was a switch from dubbing to subtitling in movie theaters (Gül 2009, 83); an increase in the number of movie theaters and the number and variety of foreign films (Gül 2009, 83); an explosion of private television channels some of which also used subtitling to advocate global integration and because of financial concerns (Mete 1999); an increase in paid TV platforms and digital platforms and videos (Tamer 1983, 134); the establishment of a state guided censorship organization due to the inability to control the inflow of the type of AV translated products which were deemed to be negatively affecting the Turkish morals and identity (for the establishment of the two central organs Radyo Televizyon Yüksek Kurulu (RTYK) November 1983 and Radyo ve Televizyon Üst Kurulu (RTÜK) 1994 see Kejanlıoğlu 2001, 110–113); and new laws on media and cinema which brought copyright concerns cutting out adaptations and bringing on legal remakes (for details see Law numbered 3257 enacted on 23/1/1986 on Copyright in Cinema, Video and Music).

As the following chart providing figures on the cinema going public in the 1980's clearly indicates, in the 1980s not only was there a decrease in the numbers of cinema going public with the arrival of private TV channels but also a dominance of foreign subtitled films over local productions with trend changing very fast within the decade given (Figures compiled from Yavuzkanat 2010).

*Figure 2.  Cinema going*
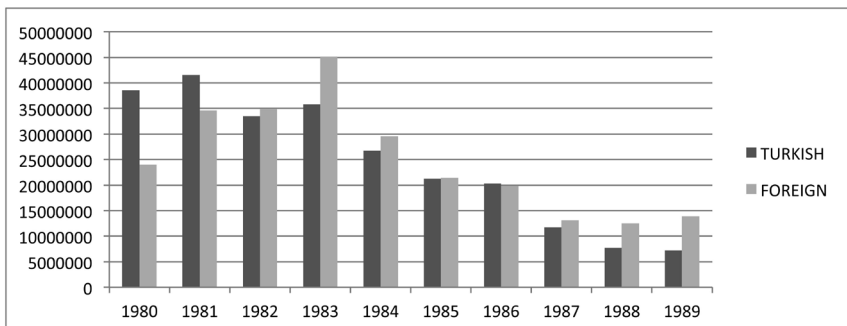
The 1990's was a clear case of the dominance of subtitling with the local cinema sector collapsing, as the chart below on the number of Turkish and foreign productions viewed in cinemas clearly displays (Figures compiled from Yavuzkanat 2010).

*Figure 3.  Films viewed in cinemas*
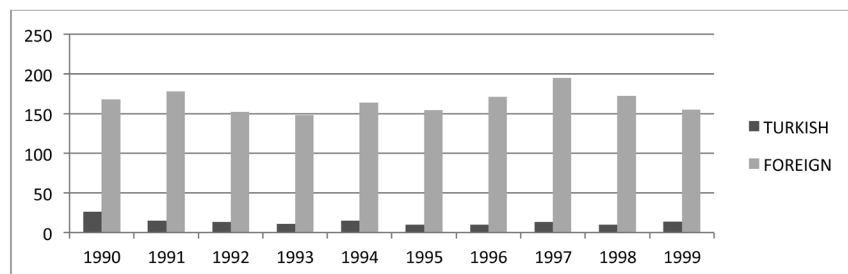


## 7.  A wealth of AVT in the 21ˢᵗ century

Interestingly enough, with the turn of the millennium, just a short while later, the Turkish AVT sector saw the rise of other phenomena. The change in the political front with the election of a conservative government foregrounding its Islamic identity but not excluding modern life or its habit of consumption (Daldeniz 2010, 227) led to a demand for even a larger variety of Western products. With Turkey's efforts to become a full member of the EU and to attain regional power, the inflow and outflow of translated AV products grew immensely both to better acquaint the local public with the world they were striving to become a part of and to allow Turkey to be better known on the global platform.

This brought on the use of the Internet to disseminate AV products and the rise in the social translation sector (Okyayuz 2016a); the advent of other technologies such as DVD and diverse subtitling practices (Okyayuz 2016b); as opposed to the 1990s, the heavy censorship of AVT products and the politization of dubbing practices for conservative audiences; the advent of remakes on a large scale (Fındık & Okyayuz 2013), the first examples of which were faithful translations, but which evolved into freer remakes aligning itself not with the original work but with contemporary Turkish conservative norms (Okyayuz 2016c); and a revival of a contemporary Turkish cinema and television with its own rich repertoire and ex-translation of Turkish series and films (Okyayuz 2016d).

Today, Turkey continues its efforts in AVT with not only in-translation (subtitling, dubbing, remakes according to channel and viewer preference sometimes even of the same product) of foreign AV products, but also developing an AV

ex-translation sector where Turkish translators translate (i.e. subtitling and script translation) into languages such as English, French or German which in turn are translated into the local languages of countries where Turkish AV products are aired. Currently over 150 Turkish soap operas have been aired in ninety countries in the world reaching over four hundred million viewers yearly (Akyol 2014). Studies are conducted in the fields of politics, diplomacy, economics, sociology, anthropology and others on the cultural, religious, social, economic and other impacts of these translated products (Okyayuz 2016e).

In this sense the greatest changes in the 21st century are the addition of ex-translation to the Turkish AVT spectrum, the legalization of adaptations into remakes, the variety of AVT with dubbing, subtitling and audio description existing side by side. Turkey continues to use the power of AVT both internally and externally as it has for the last century as a soft power tool both in the political and social sense.

## 8. Conclusion

In conclusion, the research presented is a severely shortened version of the data compiled for the research project, also limited by the inability to provide AV material which would make many issues clearer and more striking. But overall, in the case of the trajectory of AVT in Turkey and the use of the different types of AVT for specific purposes, research suggests that there is evidence to support the claim that different types of AVT may be used in line with social, political aspirations and in line with the realities of certain eras.

It is logical to assert that in countries where AV viewer rates are high and other forms of communication and information flow (i.e. literacy rates, reading books, buying newspapers etc.) are relatively low, AVT (in its widest sense) is and can be used as a political and social tool with the types of AVT practiced depending not only on technological developments and degree of censoring embraced, but also on the politics and aspirations of the country.

The appropriation of AVT products depend on changes to national laws, social norms, stability vs. turmoil (increase in filters) in the country and population shifts. Overall, types of AVT practiced where embraced and sometimes changed in Turkish AVT history in the following instances: When the local repertoire needed enriching (1930–1990) all types of AVT were embraced; when politics and society get restless (1960–1980) filtering was introduced with increase in dubbing and adaptations allowing for appropriation; when there are new directions in policy and society (1950's, 1990, 2000's) new forms of AVT such as subtitling were introduced; when the economy suffered (1960's, 1985–1990's) and when there are

sociatal shifts (1970's, 2000's) various changes occured on the AVT scene. Though the research is not yet complete, these seem to be the major political and societal factors affecting changes in the AVT scene in Turkey.

AVT research of this kind, compiling a repertoire of histories and trajectories (both collective trends and case studies of each country, community, language) allows one to view the issue of AVT from a larger perspective which leads to an understanding of the complex interaction between AVT, change, society and power, which is undeniably one of the central issues in AVT research. It could be suggested that such a compilation from a variety of cultures and countries could open further avenues of thought and research.

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# When intertextual humour is supposed to make everyone laugh… Even after translation

**Abstract:** This paper will discuss what has been done by the dubbing team in charge of producing a version for the Spaniard audience in four DreamWorks' animated feature films with a focus on challenging humour based on intertextuality. These cases resulted in the disappearance of the joke in the target version for several reasons beyond the constraints imposed by the audiovisual text and will be described as well.

These four examples were analysed in the PhD dissertation (*La alusión como fuente de creación de humor y su traducción: análisis del cine de animación de DreamWorks (2001–2012)* (2015) in English, *Allusion as a Resource to Create Humour and its Translation: Analysis of DreamWorks (2001–2012) Animated Feature Films* (2015) (López González, 2015) aimed at identifying the intertextual humorous elements used in this company's productions. Furthermore, this paper includes the hypothesis, the methodological approach and some of the results of this in-depth study. Essential definitions of intertextuality and humour will also be provided as touchstones in order to present the state of the art (Attardo, 1989; Attardo & Raskin's GTVH, 1991; Bakhtin & Volochinov, 1977; Barthes, 1968; Genette, 1982; Goatly, 2012; Kristeva, 1969; and Raskin, 1985).

## 1. Introduction

The study of intertextuality has attracted the attention of several researchers for more than half a century. The *Tel Quel* group in Paris began the study of this phenomenon during the 1960's. It was thanks to authors such as Kristeva, Neubert and Beaugrande & Dressler that intertextuality became part of research fields including translation studies and modern semiotics (Bogucki, 2013, pp. 70–71).

One of the most recurrent definitions of intertextuality in the literature was proposed by Kristeva (1969, p. 146) who, inspired by Bakhtin's concept of dialogism, affirmed that texts are built as a mosaic of quotations. Texts absorb and transform other texts, or as Kristeva stated:

> Intertextuality is defined as the textual interaction that takes place in a sole text. The concept of intertextuality to a knowledgeable individual involves the manner in which a story in a text has been narrated and becomes part of it. (Kristeva, 1968, pp. 55–64, in Broich & Pfister, 1985, p. 7, my translation)

However, dialogism not only consists of the relation that any statement establishes with all the statements previously produced but also those to be produced in the future. Bakhtin's point about dialogism serves to explain how any discourse is characterised by its dialogic orientation. In other words, as Bakhtin & Volochinov stated:

> Any statement, no matter how significant and complete it may be, constitutes only a *fraction* of a stream of uninterrupted verbal communication (about everyday life, literature, general knowledge, politics, etc.), yet this uninterrupted verbal communication constitutes at the same time a multidirectional element of the uninterrupted *evolution* of a given social group. (Bakhtin & Volochinov, 1977, p. 136, my translation)

This dialogue among several voices which interact in the same discourse has caused the death of the author's figure (Barthes, 1968) since the author does not create anything; his/her role is to reproduce the network of quotes which belong to scripters from the past.

These initial definitions and ways of understanding intertextuality led to further research conducted in the 1980's by Morgan (1985), Pfister (1985), Ette (1985), Ping-Hui (1983/84), Hebel (1989) and Rulewicz (1987) among others. In 1982 Genette devised a model into five categories (Intertextuality which includes quotation, plagiarism and allusion, Paratextuality, Metatextuality, Architextuality and Hypertextuality), which is a practical and a general classification of this phenomenon.

Mai (1991) compiled other models which have not been as widely-known as the abovementioned and whose terminology also explains the relationship among texts: "inter-semiocity" according to Popovic (1980), "inter-contextuality" by Zurbrugg (1984), "intratextual rewriting" by Altman (1981), "interauthorship" by Schabert (1983), "interdiscoursivity" as Angenot (1983) named it and "autotext" (Dällenbach, 1976). As Galván affirmed (1997) there have been several ways of understanding intertextuality, and apart from the trend to associate intertextuality to deconstructivism and poststructuralism there are other interpretations of this phenomenon which would restrict and apply the term 'intertextuality' in a more operative manner just as the German research community has done.

Within the traditional literary framework intertextuality was dealt with in Lachmann's (1982), Schmid & Stempel's (1983), Stierle's (1983), Warning's (1984) and Broich & Pfister's (1985) anthologies. Taxonomic models such as those carried out by Grivel (1975), Grübel (1983), Lachmann (1984), Lindner (1985), Plett (1985) Schulte-Middelich (1985) and Petöfi & Olivi (1988) tried to restrict this concept.

Traditional text linguistics used this concept in a restrictive manner as Beaugrande & Dressler (1981) did. Other authors who followed this approach were Nöth (1985), Schlieben-Lange (1988) and Lemke (1985).

While intertextuality has been a matter of discussion among scholars, in translation studies not much has been said about the repercussion of intertextuality in the dubbing process. Yet, intertextual references abound in texts which need to be translated in order to be understood across boundaries. These texts can also be of a polisemiotic nature or "made up of numerous codes that interact to produce a single effect." (Chiaro, 2012, p. 142) These texts are audiovisual texts which have been barely studied within the Spanish context regarding the impact that intertextuality poses on audiovisual products. Very few studies in this regard can be mentioned: Agost (1998, p. 643; 1999, p. 103) observed the existence of intertextual references which could become an obstacle for translators and adjusters:

> Intertextuality can be defined as the presentation of references in a text to other texts (oral or written, past or contemporary). These references, termed textual occurrences as well, function as signs in which the spectator is to know how to decipher if they want to understand the meaning of the whole text. In this sense, the translator must be able to recognise the reference (religious, cultural, etc.), allusion, a cliché, a famous quote and translate it in the correct way so that the spectators in the dubbed audiovisual text will have the same possibilities of recognising the intertextuality as the spectators of the original text. (Agost, 1999, p. 103, my translation)

Moreno Peinado (2005, pp. 1207–1217) also discussed the difficulties intertextuality represents for dubbing agents. Moreover, Lorenzo García (2005, pp. 136, 139 and 140) analysed the function of intertextuality in any type of text (printed or audiovisual) (humoristic, discourse builder and appellative functions).

It is precisely the humoristic function of intertextuality which has triggered this research inspired by Botella (2012, pp. 165–181) who studied the use of intertextuality in the first five seasons of the TV series *Family Guy*. Chaume (2012, p. 148) noted that this field needed "thorough empirical research, since many cartoons, children's movies and teen pics make constant use of intertextual references".

This need to study what has been recently denominated "audiovisual intertextuality" (Martínez Sierra, 2010; Fowler & Chozick, 2007) with a humoristic purpose derived in this study of intertextual humour. A type of humour which in order to trigger laughter depends on the viewer's previous knowledge to recognise it in the film.

## 2. Theoretical frameworks for humour

### 2.1. Studies and classifications of humour

To provide a definition of humour, three words are essential: entertainment, laughter and amusement. Vandaele (2010, p. 147) noted that "at first glance, humour is easy to define. Humour is what causes amusement, mirth, a spontaneous smile and laughter". In addition, laughter means that some sort of content has been created and mediated symbolically by a recipient. This content may generate a surprise, an uncertainty or insight making an audience laugh. According to Vandaele, it is through our symbolic mind that we can "turn uncertainty, surprise and danger into what we call humour" (Vandaele, 2010, p. 148).

In other words, in order to generate humour, a lack of order or certain composition of elements must be achieved. Spanakaki's interpretation of this concept helps focus attention on the main areas to be studied in this paper, namely, culture and intercultural communication, mass entertainment and cinema products, humour and audiovisual translation (AVT):

> Humour is an essential part of the everyday component of innumerable literary works and films and of art in general. It is rooted in a specific cultural and linguistic context, but it is also an indispensable part of intercultural communication and mass entertainment. (Spanakaki, 2007, n. p.)

In this sense intertextual humour can be defined as a kind of humour that requires extra knowledge which belongs to a community, nation or culture. In order to 'get' the joke it is not enough to understand the language in which it has been uttered; extra information is required, known as the 'concept of shared knowledge'.

> Humour is not for babes, Martians, or congenital idiots. We share our humour with those who have shared our history and who understand our way of interpreting experience. There is a fund of common knowledge and recollection, upon which all jokes draw with instantaneous effect; though indeed to describe the resources of the fund must seem like an undertaking of tedious length. (Nash, 1987, p. 9)

This 'fund of common knowledge' is what Even-Zohar (1997, p. 355) referred to as the 'culture repertoire', understood as "the aggregate of options utilized by a group of people, and by the individual members of the group, for the organization of life."

This culture repertoire needs to be made because:

> although sensed by the members of the group as given, and taken by them for granted, is neither generated nor inherited by our genes, but need be made, learned and adopted by people, that is the members of the group. This making is continuous, although with shifting intensity and volume. On the one hand, it may be made *inadvertently* (1) by anonymous contributors, whose names and fortune may never be known, but also *deliberately,* (2) by

known members who are openly and dedicatedly engaged in this activity. (Even-Zohar, 1997, p. 357)

Intertextual humour is a result of creating amusement and laughter by resorting to a fund of shared knowledge.

## 2.2 Theories of humour

Three main theories aim to explain the mechanisms of humour: the superiority theory, the relief theory and the incongruity theory (Critchley, 2002, p. 2; Raskin, 1979, p. 326). The superiority theory relates laughter caused by our feelings of superiority regarding someone or something else. The relief theory considers laughter as a release of nervous energy. And the third theory is the incongruity theory. Incongruity can happen according to Vandaele (2010, p. 148): "when cognitive rules are not being followed." Critchley (2002, p. 3) defines this third theory of humour as the one that includes humour "produced by the experience of a felt incongruity between what we know or expect to be the case, and what actually takes place in the joke, gag, jest or blague."

To these more philosophical theories of humour, one can add the relatively recent linguistic approach, which explains humour through semantics (meaning) and pragmatics (the speaker's intention when uttering a humorous remark). Raskin's script-based semantic theory of humour (1985), Attardo's five-level model for the analysis of joke texts (1989), Attardo & Raskin's General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH) (1991) and Ruch, Attardo & Raskin's empirical support of the GTVH (1993) are all worthy of mention, together with the twenty-first century revisions of humour carried out by Vandaele (2002), Ritchie (2004) and Goatly (2012) among others.

These theories explain how humour is created, but in this paper attention must be paid to the classification used in order to identify the intertextual humour included in the analysed corpus. The following classification together with the comparison of the source text and dubbed version pinpoint the target text missing jokes discussed here. This classification has been extracted from Chaume (2012), who summarized Martínez's (2008, pp. 143–153) classification as follows:

- Community-and-Institution Elements, which refer to cultural or intertextual features tied to a particular culture such as politicians, celebrities, organizations, newspapers, or films.
- Community-Sense-of-Humour Elements, which seem to be more popular in certain communities than in others, such as the typical use of a certain country or region as a subject to raise laughter in another country or region.
- Linguistic Elements, i.e. jokes based on wordplay, puns, etc.

- Visual Elements that elicit humour through what can be seen on screen.
- Graphic Elements, when a written text on screen is humorous.
- Paralinguistic Elements, such as non-verbal qualities of voice, certain tones, pitches and ways of speaking associated with recognizable expressions of emotions as well as narrative silences.
- Sound or Acoustic Signs recorded on the soundtrack such as special effects that, by themselves or in combination with others, may raise a smile or laughter.
- Non-marked or Miscellaneous Elements that are not easily categorized but are, nevertheless, humorous. (Chaume, 2012, pp. 149–150)

## 3. The hypotheses and the objective

The theoretical scenario described above has led to the following hypotheses:

A certain amount of content which appears in audiovisual products aimed at children and adolescents can be labelled as intertextual, requiring a prior knowledge on the part of viewers in order to be understood. This content fulfils a humoristic purpose which needs to be transferred when dubbed. The contrary would result in the non-accomplishment of the target text *skopos* (Nord, 1997) if the functionalist approach is to be considered.

The non-translation of intertextual humour results in the absence of the joke, a joke which might be sensed in the dubbed version but might not be communicated to the target viewer.

The objective of this paper will be to discuss the translator's decision-making process (including the non-translation of jokes) through four examples extracted from this case study of fourteen DreamWorks films as well as identifying the strategies/techniques put into practice.

## 4. Materials and methodology

The need to do further research on intertextuality and more specifically on audiovisual intertextual humour aimed at all audiences included in audiovisual products mainly addressed to young audiences has required the selection of a corpus which potentially included this phenomena.

Animation and its translation have been barely studied in Spain and were even considered a minoritarian genre (Yébenes, 2002, p. 84) in film listings until the appearance of DreamWorks' *Shrek* (2001). Its successful box office results served as a future advertisement of guaranteed entertainment and laughter. DreamWorks continued producing not only new sequels about the green ogre, but also other main characters that obtained the praise of the critics and general public alike.

Taken from DreamWorks' current and extensive repertoire (more than 25 films in its short eighteen-year history if this company is compared to its pioneer Disney), 14 films were selected to be part of the analysed corpus: *Shrek* (2001); *Shrek 2* (2004); *Shark Tale* (2004); *Madagascar* (2005); *Over the Hedge* (2006); *Shrek the Third* (2007); *Bee Movie* (2007); *Kung Fu Panda* (2008); *Madagascar 2: Escape to Africa* (2008); *Monsters vs. Aliens* (2009); *Shrek, Happily Ever After* (2010); *Megamind* (2010); *Kung Fu Panda 2* (2011) and *Madagascar 3: Europe's most wanted* (2012).

This corpus was compiled based on the following criteria: these films would have to be produced by the same company so that its discourse would have similar underlying values insofar as their perspectives of reality and contents would be similar despite the variety of themes covered; each of these productions were to be created exclusively in the USA; these films would be computer-generated which is the company's most-often used technique; these productions would be classified under the same genre and subgenre, namely, all of them are animated feature films and comedies (other subgenres which allow the classification of animation are: Adventure, Family, Drama, Musical, Romance, Fantasy, Western, Action and Science Fiction).

In terms of the target text, three more criteria were applied to the corpus; the films were rated in the target culture as General Audience, what is known as a 'four quadrant' film. The agency in charge of dubbing these productions would be the same one, Sonoblok S.A., and some of the voice talents in charge of bringing to life the computerised cartoon characters in the Spanish culture would be celebrities in the same way that popular celebrities were chosen in the original version.

This study was carried out by implementing a methodology which allowed the analysis for each case. These 14 films have been studied in their English original version and Spanish dubbed version with the aim of comparing the translation of the intertextual humour. The technical information was extracted from Dream-Works film productions for the period 1998 to 2012 and then the corpus was selected based on the criteria described above. In order to spot the different cases of intertextual humour, each film was screened numerous times while data was being collected through transcription and classified into 528 data sheets. In total 1,271 minutes (more than 21 hours) were analysed. To locate intertextual humour in both the ST (source text) and TT (target text), two sources were extremely helpful – firstly, the IMDB database online where comments about the humour used in each of the films have been accurately described, and secondly, the producers' and directors' comments which are included in the films' DVD's detailing the influences and homages intended with their work. Many of these comments

reveal important intertextual information which otherwise might be obscure for a translator without a thorough knowledge of American popular culture.

Three theoretical frameworks made the classification of the compiled intertextual humour (IH) possible: Type of Intertextuality; Channels and Codes involved in the transmission of the IH; and the Type of Humour created for each occurrence. The creation of a data sheet for each occurrence helped organise the information extracted from the films thus favouring the quantitative and qualitative analyses, which have been later presented in tables and graphics. These visual representations have been useful to reveal how humour has been created in the source culture and its translation into the Spanish spoken in Spain. Furthermore, the transcription of the occurrences in both languages shows which have been the translation techniques chosen in the dubbing process (adaptation, literality, omission and domestication).

This methodology has proven to be suitable for the aims of this study since a significant number of results have been obtained with regard to how intertextual humour has been created, how jokes might have been omitted or modified from the ST thus becoming missing jokes for the target culture, and which techniques have been used more frequently by the dubbing agents.

## 5.  Results and examples

The total number of compiled occurrences from the 14 DreamWorks animated feature films amounted to 745. The following table presents the number of occurrences per original version film:

*Table 1.  Intertextual humourous references*

| FILM | OCCURRENCES/ FILM |
|---|---|
| SHREK (SH1) | 75 |
| SHREK 2 (SH2) | 159 |
| SHARK TALE (ST) | 46 |
| MADAGASCAR (M1) | 42 |
| OVER THE HEDGE (OVT) | 27 |
| SHREK THE THIRD (SH3) | 78 |
| BEE MOVIE (BM) | 73 |
| KUNG FU PANDA (KFP1) | 16 |
| MADAGASCAR 2 (M2) | 32 |
| MONSTERS VS. ALIENS (MVSA) | 32 |

| FILM | OCCURRENCES/ FILM |
|------|-------------------|
| SHREK: HAPPILY EVER AFTER (SH4) | 59 |
| MEGAMIND (MGM) | 56 |
| KUNG FU PANDA 2 (KFP2) | 22 |
| MADAGASCAR 3 (M3) | 28 |
| TOTAL FIGURE | 745 |

*Shrek 2* exceeded in number, as opposed to the rest of the films, in terms of intertextual humorous references in its original version. The rest of the saga also showed high figures closely followed by Megamind (56). Kung Fu Panda, centred on action scenes, only included 16 cases.

Among the different types of intertextuality, cinematographic allusions stood out from the rest of intertextual humorous references with 181 cases. The following chart shows the different types of intertextuality, which were extracted from the corpus:

*Figure 1.  Intertextual typologies used by DreamWorks (2001–2012) to create humour*
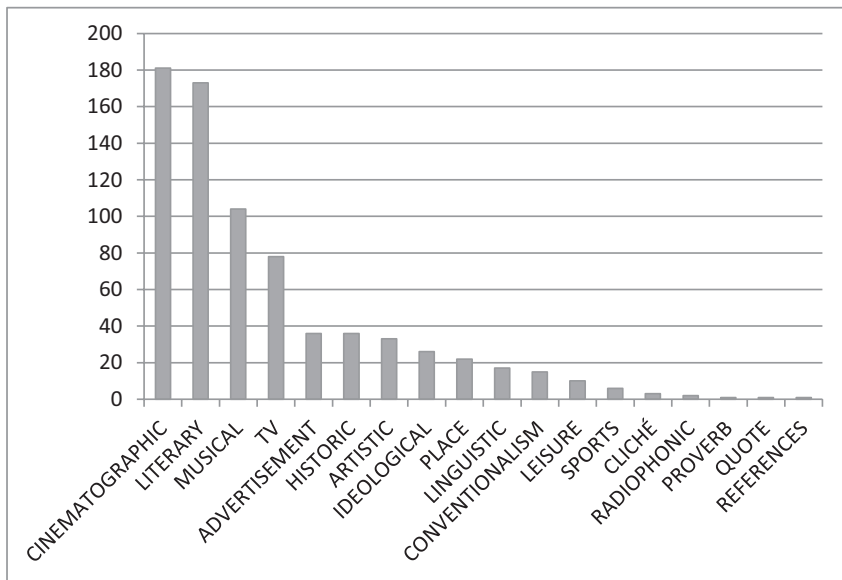


It is worth mentioning those elements which belong to the source text's community and institutions (Martínez Sierra, 2008) when discussing the humorous

elements used to create some of the intertextually humorous scenes. In fact, one could assume that intertextual humour can only be created thanks to the prior knowledge which specifically belongs to the culture where it is being produced. This study reveals the contrary since a number of occurrences were found in which intertextual humour is generated through the use of visual, graphic, para-linguistic and musical elements. Some of the examples provided below show some of these unexpected occurrences. Stemming from Martínez Sierra's classification, 745 occurrences were categorized as follows:

*Table 2.  Intertextual humorous elements per film*

| | SH1 | SH2 | ST | M1 | OVT | SH3 | BM | KFP1 | M2 | MVSA | SH4 | MGM | KFP2 | M3 | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| TOTAL | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 745 |
| COMM. & INSTIT. E. | 23 | 76 | 14 | 15 | 13 | 35 | 32 | 2 | 19 | 19 | 28 | 21 | 9 | 16 | 322 |
| VISUAL E. | 23 | 21 | 3 | 6 | 2 | 7 | 11 | 9 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 11 | 5 | 4 | 115 |
| MULTIPLE E. | 6 | 35 | 10 | 1 | 3 | 17 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 5 | 13 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 100 |
| GRAPHIC E. | 2 | 10 | 15 | 9 | 2 | 6 | 11 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 11 | 1 | 2 | 72 |
| MUSICAL E. | 9 | 10 | 4 | 5 | 0 | 8 | 5 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 10 | 10 | 0 | 1 | 66 |
| LINGUISTIC E. | 11 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 7 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 46 |
| SOUND & SIGNALS E. | 0 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 14 |
| PARALINGUISTIC E. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| COMM. HUMOUR E. | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| NON-MARKED E. | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |

Visual elements helped generate 115 intertextually humorous scenes, and the combination of multiple elements allowed the creation of 100 funny situations out of the total figure. The translation of these 745 occurrences into Spanish origin-ated several translation difficulties for the translators of these films. Each case was analysed to find out which translation technique had been put into practice. Literal translation meant the inclusion of the same content and ideas from the ST into the TT. Adaptation was the technique used when the ST content required some modification to be understood by the target audience, and non-translation or omission was put into practice when the ST scene was removed from the dubbed version. To end the brief description of the techniques followed, Venuti's (1995) term 'domestication' was chosen to describe those situations in which the intertextual humour included in the TT did not appear in the ST. This strategy was probably used as a method to compensate for the loss of certain jokes which appear in the ST, the so-called missing jokes.

   According to the above-mentioned description of the implemented techniques, it is noteworthy to observe that under the category of linguistic code (the most

noticeable code in terms of the absence of a joke in the dubbed version once the comparison with the ST has been made), intertextual humour is transmitted to the target culture through the use of literal translation in 149 occurrences. There is 1 occurrence which has been transferred to the target culture despite the linguistic omission of it in *Madagascar* and adaptation allowed the transfer of intertextual humour in 15 scenes.

The use of the literal translation technique did not produce a successful translation of the intertextual humour in 24 cases. The omission of 5 occurrences also left in the dark the Spanish audience, who did not receive the humorous remarks in Spanish. Adaptation was used due to the disparate differences between both cultures in 50 occurrences.

The use of some explanation or explicitation in the transfer of intertextual humour was also observed. Translators firstly, and the dubbing director ultimately, included some extra content in their versions to enable the literal translation of the ST content in 7 cases. Adaptation made the public laugh in 10 scenes owing to this slight addition in information on the dubbing agent's part.

## 5.1 Examples

The following four examples show how through the linguistic code intertextual humour is part of DreamWorks' productions and how translators do as much as they can to transfer humour either through literality, omission or adaptation. Translators omitted the ST's humour, which led to the non-translation of the joke in the target culture. Each example includes the data sheet which helped analyse the missing joke in which the spoken dialogue in the ST and its dubbed Spanish version have been included.

### 5.1.1 *Example 1:* Shrek *(2001) and* On the Road Again

The song by Willie Nelson *On the Road Again* communicates two meanings in the same scene. It is the beginning of Shrek's and Donkey's adventure. Donkey, whose voice is granted by Eddie Murphy, never stops singing according to the film's director, and on several occasions he was recorded while interpreting lyrics which were not even part of the script. All of this improvisation was reused in some scenes where music triggered humour. The second underlying meaning has to do with Willie Nelson's relation with the 70's musical movement labelled as *outlaw country*. This music would be for outcasts such as Shrek.

In Spanish, Donkey's song has been literally translated indicating the beginning of the adventure. However, what Willie Nelson represents with his music is lost

for the Spanish general audience. A part of the intertextual humour is, therefore, missing.

*Table 3.*

| General no. | Specific no. | Film's Title | | Time Code Record | Premiere date U.S.A. and Spain |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I&H-22 | SH1–24 | *Shrek* | | 00 : 15 : 03 | 22/04/2001 13/07/2001 |
| Type of Intertextuality | | Channel and Code | Humoristic Element | | |
| -Musical Allusion: *On the Road Again* (1980) Willie Nelson | | 1) Acoustic Channel: Musical Sound Code | 1) Musical Elements | | |
| ST | | | TT | | |
| Donkey: On the road again! Sing it with me Shrek! I can't wait to get on the road again! Shrek: What did I say about singing … Donkey: But, can I whistle? | | | Asno: ¡Al camino voy! ¡Canta conmigo Shrek! No puedo esperar. ¡Al camino voy! Shrek: Qué te había dicho acerca de cantar… Asno: Puedo silbar. | | |
| Context | | | | | |
| Shrek begins his adventure as any fairytale character would do. He decides to talk to Lord Farquaad about his swamp and Donkey makes him company. | | | | | |
| Director('s) and/or Producer('s) Comments | | | | | |
| No available comments | | | | | |

## 5.1.2  *Example 2:* Shark Tale *(2004) and* "You've got no idea"

The phrase "You've got no idea" is part of Oscar's (the protagonist's) first scenes in *Shark Tale*. According to this film's directors and producers' comments, Will Smith decided to quote this line from a song broadcast in the BET (Black Entertainment Television). This television channel does not exist in the target culture, which is not an obstacle for the literal translation of the phrase. However, the allusion to this song and TV channel will not work for the target audience. The joke will be lost in the translational process.

*Table 4.*

| General no. | Specific no. | Film's Title | Code Time Record | Premiere in U.S.A. and Spain |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| I&H-153 | ST-13 | *Shark Tale* | 00 : 04 : 05 | 1/10/2004 8/10/2004 |

| Type of Intertextuality | Channel and Code | | Humoristic Element |
|---|---|---|---|
| -Television Allusion: BET Programme | 1) Acoustic Channel: Linguistic Acoustic Code | | 1) Community and Institutions Elements |

| ST | | TT |
|---|---|---|
| Oscar: Hi, I'm Oscar. You might think you know, but you have no idea. [Rap music] Welcome to my crib. The good life, the way the other half lives. Check it out, I got my 60" high-def, flat screen TV, with 6-speaker surround, CD, DVD, Playstation hook-up and a 8-track player for days when you're feeling just a little…[beatbox] old school [laughs] 'cos even a superstar mack daddy fish like me has to have the basic necessities. | | Óscar: Hola soy Óscar, puede que lo creáis pero no tenéis ni idea. (Baila rap) Bienvenidos a mi choza. La buena vida que siempre habías soñado fijaos una tele de pantalla plana de 60 pulgadas con home cinema y surround. CD, DVD, conexión para Playstation y un 8 pistas para los días en los que buscas algo (Hace beatbox) ¡Algo retro! (Ríe) porque incluso una pecebridad, un pez superligón como yo no puede olvidar lo más necesario. |

| Context |
|---|
| Katie Current (journalist) begs on her live programme for a hero to free the reef from sharks. The next scene shows Oscar. The audience will directly associate Oscar with the hero of the story. |

| Director('s) and/or Producer('s) Comments |
|---|
| Will Smith (Oscar) utters this allusion. This sentence "and you have no idea" belongs to a song from a TV programme. |

### 5.1.3 *Example 3:* Monsters vs. Aliens *(2009) and "The Hail Mary pass"*

Monger makes reference to sports jargon to express his worries about aliens invading the country. The monsters are the only ones who can solve this crisis. This allusion makes reference to American football which is a sport barely played in Spain, thus in Spanish there are not many expressions related to this sport used in everyday language.

The translating agents opted for adaptation as a solution to this problem. Instead of making reference to American football, an expression which belongs to basketball has been included; "triple sobre la bocina" meaning a triple score at the buzzer. In Spain, basketball is more popular than rugby which will make the

intertextual reference more familiar to the audience and also funnier taking into account that Monger's tone is sarcastically dramatic.

*Table 5.*

| General no. | Specific no. | Film's title | | Time Code Record | Premiere date U.S.A. and Spain |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I&H-398 | MVSA-23 | *Monsters vs. Aliens* | | 00 : 28 : 51 | 27/03/2009 03/04/2009 |
| Type of Intertextuality | | Channel and Code | | Humoristic Element | |
| -Sport Allusion: American Football | | 1) Acoustic Channel: Linguistic Acoustic Code | | 1) Community and Institutions Elements | |
| ST | | TT | | | |
| General Monger: I'm not gonna kid you, Mr President. These are dark times. The odds are against us. We need a Hail Mary pass. We need raw power! We need…monsters. | | General Provoquer: No voy a engañarle, señor presidente. Son días duros y lo sabe. Todo está en contra, hace falta un triple sobre la bocina, usar la fuerza bruta, es decir…monstruos. | | | |
| Context | | | | | |
| The U.S. president is in a meeting with his counsellors to decide what to do with the alien robot which has landed in the country. Suddenly, general Monger breaks into the room to present the only possible solution to fight the alien creature. | | | | | |
| Director('s) and/or Producer('s) Comments | | | | | |
| No available comments | | | | | |

## 5.1.4. *Example 4:* Madagascar 2: Escape to Africa *(2008) and* New York, New York

Nana's comment "If we can make it there, we can make it anywhere!" is a clear reference to the song *New York, New York.* The shadow the fire forms behind her makes the shape of the Statue of Liberty; being, thus, a visual allusion to the Big Apple. The characters are in the Savannah but New York is ever present.

Alex, Melman, Gloria and Marty are all animals from the New York Zoo and their aim throughout the saga is to return to their home in New York. This is why this city is constantly made reference to in these three films through music, images, gestures and verbal language.

The dubbed version of these few lines is turned into a rhyme ("¡Pudiendo en la gran manzana, podemos donde nos venga en gana!") which is far different from the lyrics of the song, literally in English, "If we can make it in the Big Apple, we

can make where ever we feel like it". This rhyme is daring and even funny in Spanish, but the humorous intertextual reference has been lost. The Spanish audience will still hear in the background the soundtrack with this song's tune, which is played *in crescendo* from scene 32' 30" to the end of the sequence 33' 52". Adaptation of Nana's words is somehow a loss for the Spanish audience.

*Table 6.*

| General no. | Specific no. | Film's Title | | Time Code Record | Premiere U.S.A. and Spain |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I&H-370 | M2–21 M2–22 | *Madagascar 2: Escape to Africa* | | 00 : 32 : 30 | 07/11/2008 28/11/2008 |
| Type of Intertextuality | | Channel and Code | | Humoristic Element | |
| -Musical Allusion: *New York, New York* (1977) Frank Sinatra (1980) -Place Allusion: Statue of Liberty (1886) | | 1) Acoustic Channel: Linguistic Acoustic Code 2) Visual Channel: Iconographic Visual Code Symbol | | 1) Community and Institutions Elements 2) Visual Elements | |
| ST | | | TT | | |
| Tourist: Come on! We're New Yorkers, for crying out loud! Old lady (Nana): If we can make it there, we can make it anywhere! | | | Turista: ¡Vamos, somos neoyorkinos por Dios! Viejecita (Nana): ¡Pudiendo en la gran manzana, podemos donde nos venga en gana! | | |
| Context | | | | | |
| A group of tourists on a safari get lost in the Savannah. Nana, the granny, cheers them up and reminds them that they can survive anywhere because they are New Yorkers. | | | | | |
| Director('s) and/or Producer('s) Comments | | | | | |
| No available comments | | | | | |

## 6. Conclusions and future research

This paper presented two objectives, the first being to demonstrate that in several animated feature films intertextual humour has been introduced to entertain the audience, who need the prior knowledge to understand the statements which are being re-enounced and re-elaborated to create humour. The high number of occurrences which has been compiled confirms the first hypothesis presented above.

The second objective was to discuss some cases of missing intertextual jokes which were neglected in the production of the dubbed Spanish versions. The analysed translation strategies used by the dubbing team (adaptation, literal translation, omission and domestication) have clarified why some of these jokes could not be part of the TTs. The creation of intertextual humour in this corpus depends in great measure on the use of elements which belong to the communities and institutions of the source culture, a fact that can be problematic when cultures differ. Translators do their best to keep the humour which appears in these STs. Dubbing constraints (types of synchronism) and short deadlines should not be overlooked, and when these films are analysed in a global manner, their humorous purpose has been successfully fulfilled.

As a consequence, it should be noted that missing jokes of an intertextual nature is not an obstacle for the completion of humour in the target culture. Domestication can compensate for this lack of elements which belong to the source culture.

Despite the fact that domestication seemed to be the solution to the translator's dilemma when coping with intertextual humour, this study reveals that literal translation was the technique used more often to transfer most of the 745 compiled occurrences. This data forms a cultural connection between Spanish and US audiences. If this humour does not require adaptation for its translation, this means that the Spanish audience is able to spot, in the translator's opinion, the previous content which builds intertextuality and the contradiction or breach of scripts and frames that humour creates. The long exposure of the Spanish audience to American-produced TV series and films explains this cultural learning process. Nevertheless, this requires a future reception study which can shed light on the detection of the missing joke by comparing the original versions of these animated feature films and the existing versions dubbed into Spanish.

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# Official and non-official subtitles in Iran: a comparative study

**Abstract:** Conducted within a descriptive framework and following a comparative model of research, this study is mainly concerned with the two trends of subtitling in Iran, i.e. official and non-official, and exploring the strategies applied to these ends. As an in-between mediator and determining agent, the translator makes decisions about the quantity and quality of the content to be transferred. However, both official translators and fansubbers consciously or sub-consciously follow a number of ideological and cultural factors. These factors engender varying strategies, which fluctuates in a wide range, from zero translation to manipulation and creative translations. To find the most frequently applied strategies, nine American feature films were selected for the purpose of this study. Based on the findings and followed by a number of chi-squared tests to statistically find the relevance of the two sets, it was inferred that the two versions of subtitling in Iran follow different trends that can be interpreted with regard to the context of each version. Furthermore, the results yielded some insights to how subtitlers operate in the audiovisual media, while playing a significant role in bridging the gap between cultures.

## 1. Introduction

Nowadays, interactions between people of the so-called global village have been extensively widened by means of the ubiquitous and ever increasing communicational channels of mass-media and multimedia, which have brought people from different nations together. Such an interaction has contributed to the flourishing of translation or "language transfer" in the form of "Multimedia Translation" (MMT). Covering vast and prevailing types of translated texts, ranging from cell phone text messages to live multimedia presentations, MMT might act as a very powerful tool that can formulate and direct thoughts, interests, tastes and beliefs of human beings in an inevitable solidary direction. On this account, its consideration through academic and principled studies is of great value that might open up new horizons to our perception of the audiovisual world.

However, when it comes to studying the different modes of MMT, it is desired to consider them as a whole because of the common characteristics they display; on the other hand, studying modes individually leads to more precise results

(Diaz-Cintas 2004, para. 11). Hence, in this research, in order to obtain precise and relevant results, subtitling, as a branch of MMT, was chosen.

## 2. Theoretical discussion

### 2.1 Subtitling

Subtitles, from both a practical and a theoretical perspective, have undergone many changes and advances through their course of development. As Gottlieb (1992, p. 162) puts it, "subtitling – once considered a necessary evil – has been around since 1929, but only now is this intriguing, subtle form of translation beginning to materialize on the fringe of translation studies". This vulnerable type of audiovisual translation, emerged from the early intertitles in 1903, entered into the academic setting by a groundbreaking article composed by Lakes in 1957, and arrived into its "golden age" by 1990s (cf. Karamitroglou 2000; Diaz-Cintas 2004; O'Connel 2007). All these developments have shed light on media-specific features of subtitling one way or another. One of these highly significant features ascribed to subtitling is the change of medium, which can be regarded as the first and foremost peculiarity of subtitles. While literary translation and interpreting are considered as *horizontal* types of language transfer (speech remains speech, and writing remains writing), interlingual subtitling is regarded as *vertical* or *diagonal* one in which interlingual subtitles "jaywalks" (crosses over) from SL speech to TL writing (Gottlieb 2004, p. 17). This change of medium, along with other extralinguistic features, plays a significant role in the decisions made by the translator.

### 2.2 Official subtitling

In Iran, due to ideologically driven constraints and the wide range of audiences, there are available different subtitles of the same movie. Different people, leaning on their preferences and habits, watch the subtitled versions of their choice. Some of these subtitles are prepared in official studios, which are in conformity with the rules, and regulations set by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance[1]. In this research, such subtitles were labeled as "*official subtitles*".

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1   The Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance was founded following the Islamic Revolution by integration of Ministry of Culture and Art and Information and Tourism. To learn about the responsibilities see: http://www.farhang.gov.ir/en/profileofministry/ responsibilities.

## 2.3  Non-official subtitling (fansubbing)

Given the technological advances that have brought about the widespread accessibility of audiovisual products, the practice of subtitling in the age of information flow has experienced new modes, trends, and practices. In the words of Diaz-Cintas: "without any doubt, the most significant development to have radically affected the essence of subtitling has been the possibility of digitizing the image" (2005, p. 1). The significance of these advances can be sought in the change in "our perception of the audiovisual world and our relationship to it" due to the "shift from analog to digital technology" (Diaz-Cintas 2005, p. 1). One of the knock-on effects of this development was the creation of fansubs.

With the creation of the first anime clubs in 1980s, the tradition of fansubbing started, but "with the advent of cheap computer software and the availability on Internet of free subbing equipment, they really took off in the mid-1990s" (Diaz-Cintas & Muñoz Sánchez 2006, para. 1). The progress of this tradition was facilitated thanks to the "vast virtual community surrounding, such as websites, chat rooms, and forums, fansubs are nowadays the most important manifestation of fan translation while they are not recognized as a university discipline" (Diaz-Cintas & Muñoz Sánchez 2006, para. 2).

Correspondingly, in Iran, the wide availability of video CDs of Hollywood movies and the introduction of Windows 98 to the Iran market led to the widespread use of subtitles in 1998. The freelance translators who were interested in this industry or who were employed by an entity not affiliated to the government, using their PCs, started subtitling, and then distributed them through underground channels or on the Internet. These underground companies and amateur subtitlers have helped the progress of the practice so considerably that nowadays a Persian subtitle, although non-official, can be found for almost all the imported American movies and TV-series. It seems that such subtitles do not follow certain rules or even if they do, they are subject to individually defined rules. In this research, such subtitles are labeled as "*non-official subtitles*", also known as underground subtitles.

It is generally held that these two trends of subtitling in Iran have their own pros and cons and thus require different strategies. These two trends of subtitling and the strategies applied to these ends are the main focus of this study.

## 2.4  Subtitling strategies

The term *translation strategies,* at the text-linguistic studies of translation, is used to describe what happens when a translator turns a source text into a target text (Chesterman 2005, p. 17). This process has been previously labeled by different

scholars as "*operations*", "*procedure*", "*technique*", "*change*", "*solution-type*", "*shift*" and "*method*" (Chesterman 2005, p. 17). These terms do not rule out terminological misunderstanding but they are more or less the same. Chesterman (2005, p. 26), in an attempt to reduce the overall number of terms, distinguishes between: *method*, *strategy*, *technique* and *shift*. Briefly speaking, *method* is used to refer to translation type such as free, literal, semantic, and communicative. *Strategy* is restricted to a general way of translating in its basic problem-solving sense as a plan that is implemented in a given context and is cognitive procedure not linguistic. On the other hand, *technique* refers to routine, micro-level, textual procedures such as changing a noun to a verb or adding more explicit cohesion so that it is a linguistic procedure. *Shift* can be regarded as the result of the procedure and is observable as a kind of difference between target and source. In this research, Lörscher's definition of translation strategy was adopted to have an operational definition of *subtitling strategy*, i.e. "a potentially conscious procedure for the solution of a problem which an individual is faced with when translating a text segment from one language into another" (Lörscher 1991, p. 76; cited in Knaappila 2009: 6).

As a confined mode of translation, subtitling imposes psychological and cognitive demands on subtitlers that differ considerably from the challenges upon text translators in its generally-acknowledged literal sense. Thus, besides the translation skills, subtitlers need further special skills, which necessitates the subtitlers' using a number of strategies to overcome the existing barriers. Different scholars, in their quest of the strategies, have devised a number of those. This research is an attempt to explore, label, and define the strategies applied in the corpus under study. Gottlieb's (1992) subtitling strategies were used as a starting point, and in cases that they were not functional (due to linguistic and cultural differences), new strategies were defined to accurately describe the choices made by the subtitler. In a further attempt, these strategies were put under the five main categories taken from ancient rhetoric, as defined in Delabastita (1989, p. 199): (1) *Repetitio;* (2) *Adiectio*; (3) *Detractio*; (4) *Transmutatio*; and (5) *Substitutio.*

## 3.  Methodology

### 3.1  Design and research type

In the present study, the objective was to analyze the data without any further judgments or evaluation. The two sets of subtitled movies were needed to be compared and contrasted. Generally speaking and in compliance with the methodology proposed by William and Chesterman (2002), this research is:

1) *Descriptive*, it tried to describe regularities of translational behavior in the two subtitled trends while no judgment or evaluation was made;
2) *Comparative*, since corpus-driven data were compared and contrasted between the transcriptions of the original sound tracks and subtitles.
3) *TT oriented*, in this research, notwithstanding the process-oriented considerations, the approach to translation strategies is mainly product-oriented and the strategies used to create the TT.

This research falls under the category of *Empirical* research as it focuses on data; and is regarded as a kind of *Naturalistic* subtype of Empirical studies as far as no interference is involved. Having both *quantitative* and *qualitative* features, this study neither concerned macro-level strategies nor technical norms of the subtitles. It only dealt with the micro-structural and text-linguistic level of subtitles which is mainly the task of the translator or translation teams. This study neither investigated the grammatical shifts and those strategies which are applied because of the systematic differences between English and Persian language systems. Put in other words, systematic strategies employed due to the inherent differences between the two languages were not considered. Punctuations and typographical and spelling mistakes were excluded from the scope of this research. Ultimately, this study was *Corpus-Based* and used a small collection of movies, as presented below.

## 3.2   The corpus

In order to fulfill the purpose of this study, a bilingual parallel corpus was developed based on 9 Hollywood movies, including three parts: one English version of the script and two Persian versions of corresponding subtitled texts. In fact, the selected corpus contained 27 texts, nine in English and eighteen in Persian.

Information about the length of each movie is listed in Table 1. First, the number of words existing in the scripts of the movies was calculated, so that equal parts from each movie could be selected. Consequently, the third 20% of the English script, available in the two Persian versions, was used and comparisons were made.

*Table 1.  List of Components*

| No. | Film Title (Duration) | Title in Persian (Duration) | Duration (min) | | Director | Year |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Official | Non-official | | |
| 1 | **Spy Game (126)** | Jāsûs Bāzî | 97 | 126 | Tony Scott | 2000 |
| 2 | **Lord of the Rings: the Two Towers (LOTR) (231)** | Arbāb-e-Halqihā 2 | 231 | 223 | Peter Jackson | 2002 |
| 3 | **Constantine (121)** | Konstāntîn | 125 | 121 | Francis Lawrence | 2005 |
| 4 | **V for Vendetta (132)** | Entiqâm-jû | 117 | 132 | James McTeigue | 2005 |
| 5 | **Mission: Impossible III (126)** | Maʾmûr□yat-e Gheir-e Momkin 3 | 96 | 126 | J.J. Abrams | 2006 |
| 6 | **Eragon (104)** | Ārāgon | 95 | 104 | Stefen Fangmeier | 2006 |
| 7 | **I Am Legend (101)** | Man Afsāneh Hastam | 88 | 101 | Francis Lawrence | 2007 |
| 8 | **Eagle Eye (118)** | Čašm-e Oqāb | 110 | 118 | D.J. Caruso | 2008 |
| 9 | **Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen (150)** | Tabdîl Šavandegan 2 | 104 | 150 | Michael Bay | 2009 |
| | | Total | 1063 | 1201 | | |

## 4.  Data analysis

Subtitling strategies, their investigation, analysis, and discussion were demanding, especially in exploring the logic behind the choices. However, attempts were made to be as descriptive as possible. After watching the 9 movies and studying the parts selected, a detailed line by line and word by word comparison was performed between the spoken sound tracks and the two officially and non-officially subtitled versions, irrespective of the censored parts in the official versions and regardless of the captions and displays as distinguished by Gottlieb (2013, p. 38). In his model, Gottlieb mentions 10 subtitling strategies which were used as the basis of this research and some main categories, strategies and sub-categories were further

developed accordingly. These wide ranges of sub-categories were devised to allow labeling the translators' choices with regard to their slightly varied application. Finally, a chi-square test was carried out to examine the relationship between the results obtained from the two sets of subtitles. The classification of collected instances based on the devised framework is presented in the following sections[2,3].

## 4.1  Repetitio

*Repetitio* refers to instances where the sign is formally reproduced in an identical manner. This reproduction might include transfer (literal translation), imitation, or transcription (mostly in the case of proper nouns). Below an instance of *Repetition* is given, where we can see a literal translation and adequate rendering of the SL neutral discourse with slow tempo[4].

*Table 2.  Sample Subtitle Applying Transfer Strategy*

| Movie | English Script | Persian Subtitle | Literal Translation |
|---|---|---|---|
| **V for Vendetta** | She changed her name. | اسمش رو تغییر داده | **She has changed her name** |
| | | اون اسمشو عوض کرده | **She has changed her name** |

Another example of *Repetitio* is imitation, which refers to the production of identical expressions by equivalent rendering of original film segments. Gottlieb (1992, p. 161) maintains that this strategy applies to proper nouns and international gatherings. In imitation, the subtitler may transliterate the original expression, irrespective of the existence of a TL equivalent. In the following two examples, this strategy is applied to proper nouns and a job title, respectively.

As the example below shows, in the two subtitled versions, the names of the places, i.e. *Helm's Deep* and *Rohan*, are fully transliterated into Persian.

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2   The first row of the third column of each table is allocated to the official subtitle and the second one to the non-official one.

3   In some of the examples, more than one strategy might have been detected; however, in the remarks only the introduced strategy will be discussed.

4   It should be noted that subject pronoun can be omitted in Persian language; hence, it was not taken as an effective element.

*Table 3.  Sample Subtitle Applying Imitation Strategy*

| Movie | English Script | Persian Subtitle | Literal Translation |
|-------|----------------|------------------|---------------------|
| **LOTR** | They will flee to *Helm's Deep*, the great fortress of *Rohan*. | اونها در حال فرار به <u>هلمزدیپ</u> هستند دژ مستحکم <u>روحان</u>. | They are fleeing to <u>Helm's Deep</u>, the great fortress of <u>Rohan</u>. |
| | | اونها در حال فرار به <u>هلمزدیپ</u> هستند دژ مستحکم <u>روحان</u>. | They are fleeing to <u>Helm's Deep</u>, the great fortress of <u>Rohan</u>. |

In the example below, the job title is transliterated as if it is a proper name in the non-official version. Although the term "paralegal" may not be known to the audience, its reference and job description is discussed in the audiovisual context of the film.

*Table 4.  Sample Subtitle Applying Imitation Strategy*

| Movie | English Script | Persian Subtitle | Literal Translation |
|-------|----------------|------------------|---------------------|
| **Eagle Eye** | I'm a *paralegal*. | من <u>دستیار وکالتم</u>. | I am a <u>lawyer assistant</u>. |
| | | من یه <u>پارالگال</u> هستم. | I am a <u>Paralegal</u> |

In other cases, the subtitler may decide to transfer the segment into the TT without any change, either alphabetically or literally. This translational behavior might be applied to acronyms or segments that cannot be transcribed. In the non-official version of the example below, since the URL cannot be imitated or transferred, it is repeated.

*Table 5.  Sample Subtitle Applying Imitation Strategy*

| Movie | English Script | Persian Subtitle | Literal Translation |
|-------|----------------|------------------|---------------------|
| **Transformers** | You never heard of The *RealEffingDeal.com*? | حتی اسم روسا و همکاراشم نشنیدی آره | You never heard of his colleagues and bosses, did you? |
| | | تا حالا در مورد این شنیدی <u>TheRealEffingDeal.com</u>? | You never heard of this: The <u>RealEffingDeal.com</u>? |

Obviously, extreme uses of literal translation might not be always functional and dynamic, especially when it comes to the translation of proverbs and idioms. This strategy, which also falls under the umbrella term of *Repetitio*, follows a literal transfer of the ST expression, which may produce an anomalous expression as a result of extreme literalism. In the non-official version of the following example,

the proverb is an attempt to transcribe the ST idiom, which has lead into an anomalous expression, while the official version has simply domesticated the proverb.

*Table 6. Sample Subtitle Applying Transcription Strategy*

| Movie | English Script | Persian Subtitle | Literal Translation |
|---|---|---|---|
| **I am Legend** | *Just fishing in the dark, son.* | داری آب تو هاون می کوبی مرد | You're pounding water in a mortar, man! |
| | | <u>مثل ماهیگیری تو غروب خورشید</u> | Like fishing in sunset. |

## 4.2  Adiectio

According to the ancient rhetoric, *Adiectio* refer to instances where the sign is reproduced with a certain addition. This addition may take a number of forms, including the sub-strategies of bifurcation, addition, explicitation, duplication, and completion. The few examples below elaborate on the varieties of this umbrella category.

As we are dealing with an audiovisual text, the subtitler may choose to add segments that are of less informative importance. These segments may include addition of forms of address, repetitions, formulaic expressions, tag questions, etc. However, the subtitler may add these fillers with different aims, such as emphasizing the features that are inferred from audio or pictorial features. It seems that these additions do not alter the original significantly, while they may not also seek bringing about a further understanding of the whole context. In the following table, two examples of such additions are presented.

*Table 7. Sample Subtitle Applying Addition Strategy*

| Movie | English Script | Persian Subtitle | Literal Translation | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Spy Game** | And it could have been you. | <u>ناتان</u> ممکن بود تو جای اون باشی. | <u>Nathan</u>, it could have been you. | In the official version the name of the addressee is added, in order to explicate the supposed ambiguity of the context. |
| | | ممکن بود تو جای اون باشی. | It could have been you. | |
| **I am Legend** | 11 Washington Square. | شماره 11 میدون آرژانتین | No. 11, Argentina Square | In the non-official version the number is repeated twice, as a result of the audiovisual context. |
| | | واشنگتن 11 <u>...11...</u> | Washington <u>…11…11</u> | |

On the other hand, in a number of cases, it seems that the additions were meant to bring further understanding or, in other words, a more explicit rendering. In the example below, the addition might not be quite necessary, while it elaborates on the implication made in the ST.

*Table 8.  Sample Subtitle Applying Expansion Strategy*

| Movie | English Script | Persian Subtitle | Literal Translation |
|-------|----------------|------------------|---------------------|
| **Spy Game** | Forty minutes from Su Chou prison. | چهل دقیقه تا سوچو فاصله داره. | <u>The distance</u> is forty minutes from Su Chou |
| | | چهل دقیقه تا سوچو فاصله داره. | <u>The distance</u> is forty minutes from Su Chou |

Another variety of addition includes instances where a simple word or sentence is rendered into two words or sentences. This is the case while the same segment can be translated into one single equivalent, however, the subtitler may decide to bifurcate the ST segment into two TL segments, carrying the same information. In some cases, this decision might be made as a result of stylistic considerations. As mentioned in the example below, in both versions one word is translated as two words, although it could be simply rendered as one word.

*Table 9.  Sample Subtitle Applying Bifurcation Strategy*

| Movie | English Script | Persian Subtitle | Literal Translation |
|-------|----------------|------------------|---------------------|
| **Eagle Eye** | So I think maybe one *parent* should have gone. | من فكر ميكنم حداقل <u>پدر یا مادرش</u> باید میرفتن | I think maybe at least the <u>father or mother</u> should have gone |
| | | به خاطر همینه که میگم حداقل یكي از <u>پدر و مادر</u> باید مي رفت | That is why I say maybe <u>the father or mother</u> should have gone |

In other cases of addition, a completely new sentence is added. This addition might help to emphasize the audio and visual channels or fill the gap which is made as a result of deliberate previous omissions. In the official version of the following example, with respect to the slow speaking tempo, a new sentence is added. This unnecessary duplication might be said to result into a more dramatic rendition.

*Table 10.  Sample Subtitle Applying Duplication Strategy*

| Movie | English Script | Persian Subtitle | Literal Translation |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Spy Game** | Don't tell me that! | اینو به من نگو <u>این مزخرفات رو تحویل من نده</u>. | Don't tell me this! <u>Don't give me this nonsense</u>. |
| | .-این حرفا رو به من نزن | Don't tell me these words. |

There are also other cases in a filmic discourse where the instances of incomplete sentences might get completed by the subtitler. This strategy might be a result of the change in the medium from the more dynamic speaking to the more rule-based writing. In both versions of the following example, the incomplete sentence was completed. As an outcome of medium change, the tone of ST cannot be reproduced in the subtitle; therefore, completion might convey the intended meaning hidden in the tone of the speaker.

*Table 11.  Sample Subtitle Applying Completion Strategy*

| Movie | English Script | Persian Subtitle | Literal Translation |
|---|---|---|---|
| **V for Vendetta** | If they found that here… | اگه پیداش کنن <u>میدونی چی میشه؟</u> | If they find it, <u>do you know what happens?</u> |
| | اگر اینو اینجا پیدا کنند <u>برات بد نمیشه؟</u> | If they find this here, <u>won't it be a trouble to you?</u> |

## 4.3  Detractio

*Detractio* refers to the instances where the reproduction is incomplete and implies a reduction. The same kind of information which are prone to addition might be omitted. The sub-strategies of this category, which were counterpart to *Adiectio* strategies, included decimation, deletion, condensation, obliteration, and incompletion.

In some cases, the subtitler may find some of the ST segments with less verbal content and, hence, decides to omit them due to spatial and temporal constraints, as an inherent feature of subtitles. These segments may include interjections, formulaic expressions, tag questions, etc. which might be omitted since the audience is receiving the text through audio and visual channels and thus it might not be essential to translate the script line by line. The following table demonstrates two examples, as extracted from the corpus.

*Table 12. Sample Subtitle Applying Deletion Strategy*

| Movie | English Script | Persian Subtitle | Literal Translation | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Eragon** | *Oh*, it's easy, | کاری نداره | It doesn't take much | As the audience might comprehend the italic interjection thorough auditory channel, its omission may not distort the content to be transferred. |
|  |  | آسونه | It's easy |  |
| **M:I:III** | I used to have this professor at Oxford, *okay*? | وقتیکه تو آکسفورد درس میخوندم یه استاد داشتیم | When I was studying at Oxford, I had a professor | In both versions the rhetoric question is omitted. As a consequence of this omission, no substantial reduction in verbal content is observed. |
|  |  | ما تو دانشگاه اکسفورد یه پروفسور داشتیم | We had a professor at Oxford |  |

Moreover, the subtitler might resort to condensation of verbal contents, which is seen as the prototypical subtitling scenario. Importantly, in this strategy, the less important information is reduced or omitted for the sake of the information, which is of higher verbal content. In both versions of the following example, the italic part was deleted.

*Table 13. Sample Subtitle Applying Condensation Strategy*

| Movies | English Script | Persian Subtitle | Literal Translation |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Transformers** | If you resist us, we will destroy the world *as you know it.* | اگر در مقابل ما مقاومت کنید ما دنیای شما رو نابود میکنیم | If you resist us, we will destroy your world. |
|  |  | اگه مقاومت کنید، جهانتون رو نابود خواهیم کرد | If you resist us, we will destroy your world. |

Due to the change of medium in subtitles, some form of reduction is necessary for the audience to be able to follow the lines. As a result, longer structures and sentences may merge into shorter ones. Note the following example in which the official version has merged all three sentences into one single sentence. Since the speech tempo in this part of the movie is slow, this unnecessary reduction might have destroyed the supposed aesthetic effect of the ST.

*Table 14.  Sample Subtitle Applying Decimation Strategy*

| Movie | English Script | Persian Subtitle | Literal Translation |
|-------|----------------|------------------|---------------------|
| **I am legend** | *I can provide food.*<br>*I can provide shelter.*<br>*I can provide security* | من می توانم غذا، سرپناه و امنیت فراهم کنم | <u>I can provide food, shelter, and security.</u> |
| | | من مي توانم غذا برايش فراهم كنم من مي تونم پناهش بدهم من امنيت او را فراهم مي كنم | I can provide food.<br>I can provide shelter.<br>I can provide security |

In some other cases, omission may apply to a whole sentence for a number of reasons such as lack of space and time, or in cases of ideological considerations. The official version of the following example has omitted the whole sentence because of the overlaps.

*Table 15.  Sample Subtitle Applying Obliteration Strategy*

| Movie | English Script | Persian Subtitle | Literal Translation |
|-------|----------------|------------------|---------------------|
| **I am Legend** | It's okay. | ---- | ---- |
| | | همه‌چی روبه راه است | Everything is okay |

While the incomplete sentences may get completed in subtitles; in some cases, the translator may decide to left the ST sentences incomplete. Consider the following example in which as a result of the fast speech tempo, we can observe an incomplete rendering in the official subtitle to overcome the spatial and temporal constraints.

*Table 16.  Sample Subtitle Applying Incompletion Strategy*

| Movie | English Script | Persian Subtitle | Literal Translation |
|-------|----------------|------------------|---------------------|
| **Transformer** | The FBI, CIA and Interpol are all seeking the cooperation *of worldwide law enforcement.* | تمام دستگاهها با پلیس بین المللی همه به دنبال همکاری با----- | All the international agents are seeking the cooperation of… |
| | | اف‌بی‌آي ، سي‌آي‌اي و پلیس بین الملل دارن باهمکاري هم تمام دنیا رو جستجو میکنن | The FBI, CIA and Interpol are all seeking the cooperation to search all over the world. |

## 4.4 Transmutatio

In ancient rhetoric, *Transmutatio* refers to instances where the components of the signs are repeated in a somehow internal order. In this study, *Transmutatio* was used to label a number of cases, including dislocation, conversion, justification, and deacronymization. Some of these cases are mentioned below.

In some instances, the same idea was stated with some minor structural or lexical changes, i.e. active ↔ passive, negative ↔ positive, simplification, generalization, etc. In these instances, the integration of audio and visual features also contributes to the understanding of the message. In the following example, the specific SL reference, i.e. *my brother*, is translated as a pronoun (an instances of generalization), which not only conveys the same meaning, but also facilitates the reading.

*Table 17.  Sample Subtitle Applying Generalization Strategy*

| Movies | English Script | Persian Subtitle | Literal Translation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Eagle Eye | If you knew *my brother*, you'd laugh all day at *the idea* that he was a terrorist or a spy or whatever else you're saying | اگه تو اونو می شناختی به این نظریه که اون یه خرابکار جاسوس بوده حتما میخندیدی | If you knew <u>him</u>, you'd laugh all day at *the theory* that he was a subversive or a spy. |
|  |  | اگه برادرم رو می شناختی تمام روز رو به این میخندیدي که اون یه تروریست یا یه جاسوس باشه. | If you knew my brother, you'd laugh all day at <u>this</u> that he was a terrorist or a spy. |

Another instance of *Transmutatio* can be found in the conversions, where SL units and currencies are converted to TL units and currencies instead of being transcribed or imitated. It is worth pointing out that in the data under study no instance of such conversion was found in the non-official version. This may be indicative of the range of subtitlers' professionalism and awareness; or it might even indicate subtitlers' presupposition about the range of knowledge of the audience. In the official version of the example below, a TL unit is used instead of the SL one, although the value is not converted, the audience might be able to have an understandable and clear view, and immediately deciphers the intended meaning.

*Table 18.  Sample Subtitle Applying Conversion Strategy*

| Movie | English Script | Persian Subtitle | Literal Translation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Transformer | You ever had your stomach tongued by a mountain ox with a *five-foo*t tongue? | تا حالا با یه اکسیژن کوهستانی و با یه زبون پنج <u>متری</u> رو به رو شدی | Have you ever faced a mountain oxygen with a <u>five-meter</u> tongue? |
| | | تا حالا زبونتو تو دهن یه گاو نر کردي؟ | Have you ever stuck your tongue in the mouth of an ox? |

*Transmutatio* is also applicable to instances where acronyms are disjoined to be transferred into what they stand for, such as name of organizations or other entities in the form of an acronym. In the following example, both versions have deacronymized the *italic* part to render "United States Ship" for USS, while its imitation might have lead into a non-dynamic rendition.

*Table 19.  Sample Subtitle Applying Deacronymization Strategy*

| Movie | English Script | Persian Subtitle | Literal Translation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Transformer | The aircraft carrier *USS* Roosevelt goes down off the East Coast, all hands lost. | <u>ناو هواپیمابر ایالات متحده</u> به ته دریا سرازیر شده تمامی پرسنل از بین رفته‌اند | <u>United States Ship</u> goes down off the sea, all personnel lost. |
| | | <u>ناو هواپیمابر ایالات متحده</u> ، به ته دریا سرازیر شد. کلیه پرسنلش مردن | <u>United States Ship</u> goes down off the sea, all personnel are dead. |

## 4.5  Substitutio

*Substitutio* is concerned with replacing a sign with an altogether different sign. Three strategies were identified for this main category, including modification, resignation, and paraphrase. Below are some instances of this category.

An instance of *Substitutio* is paraphrase (as defined by Gottlieb 1992) which refers to the production of an altered expressions from the original film segments. As Taylor (1999, p. 12) maintains the phraseology of the original cannot be reconstructed in the same syntactic way in the target language. This mostly applies to instances of idioms, proverbs or sayings. In translating them, the subtitlers may provide a similar expression in the TL or a neutral rendering, i.e. conveying the meaning intended by that expression. Reversely, there might be cases where a neutral phrase in SL is rendered as an expression in the TL. For example, the

official version below is an attempt to render the SL idiom into a TL idiom, which might facilitate understanding the intended meaning. In other cases, this kind of domestication may sound awkward to the audience and can interfere with their expectations, as they are aware of being exposed to foreign discourse.

*Table 20. Sample Subtitle Applying Paraphrase Strategy*

| Movie | English Script | Persian Subtitle | Literal Translation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Spy Game | You're afraid the lid to the cookie jar is gonna shut on our hand? | و حالا می ترسین این تف سر بالا برگرده تو صورت خودمون | <u>And now you're afraid that this head-up spit falls back on our face</u> |
| | | و حالا می ترسید همین بلا سر خودمون بیاد | And now you're afraid that the same fate befalls us. |

In some other instances of *Substitutio,* a sign is altogether replaced with another sign which bears no resemblance to the original or the alleged resemblance does not convey the same meaning. Application of this strategy may lead the TL verbal segments suffer a loss of (semantic or stylistic) information. Consider the following example, where the situation is about going on a trip with one's son, while the meaning is distorted due to reproducing a different context. This change might be a result of lack of comprehension or even an attempt to have a more dramatic rendition.

*Table 21. Sample Subtitle Applying Resignation Strategy*

| Movie | English Script | Persian Subtitle | Literal Translation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Eagle Eye | *I could've gone. I should have.* | ممکن بود بمیرم. باید میمردم | <u>I could've died.</u> <u>I should have died.</u> |
| | | من میتونستم باهاش برم. باید این کارو می کردم | I could've gone. I should have done that. |

Some of the changes, which are observed in the instances of *Substitutio*, seem to be conscious alterations. These manipulations seem to be made during the translation process to protect the audience from the materials that the authorities/subtitlers may find inappropriate, with the aim of complying with the current norms of the society. These sensitive issues, which may undergo these changes, might be political, moral, religious, etc. Obviously, non-official subtitles as a non-government-regulated version, may not be concerned with exerting these alterations. In the official version of the example below, the Arabic name was modified into another name, removing the political and ideological associations.

*Table 22. Sample Subtitle Applying Modification Strategy*

| Movie | English Script | Persian Subtitle | Literal Translation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Spy Game | *Sheik Salameh* was our target. | شارل سالوم هدف ما بود | <u>Charles Sallum</u> was our target |
| | | هدف ما شیخ سلامه بود | Our target was *Sheik Salameh* |

## 5. Results and discussion

After analysing the whole corpus, a total of 6197 strategies were explored. The following table and chart illustrate the distribution of main categories.

*Table 23. Distribution of the Main Categories*

| Description | | Repetitio | Adiectio | Detractio | Transmutatio | Substitutio | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Official | F. | 1495 | 358 | 601 | 416 | 301 | 3171 |
| | % | 47% | 11% | 19% | 13% | 9% | 100% |
| Non-official | F. | 2016 | 145 | 438 | 219 | 209 | 3026 |
| | % | 67% | 5% | 14% | 7% | 7% | 100% |

*Figure 1. Frequency of the Main Categories*
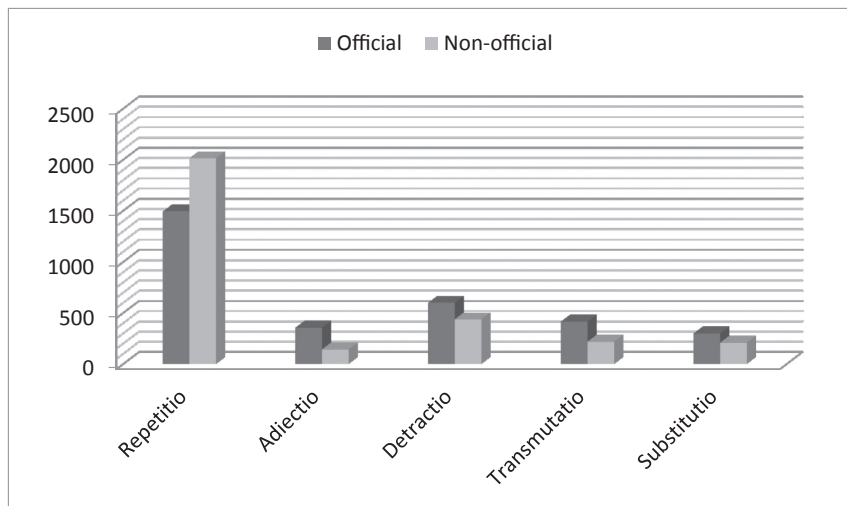
While Table 2 and Figure 1 present the results of this study, it is important to logically and, thus, statistically find the relevance of the two sets of independent data. To this end, a number of *chi-squared tests* (also referred to as $\chi^2$ test) were used to determine whether there is a significant difference between the observed data in the two sets of subtitles. To elaborate on the results obtained in this test, it should be pointed out that the expected count of more than 25 cells should be less than 5 for the two sets to be significantly different. In what follows, the result of chi-squared test for each strategy is presented along with its discussion.

Taking into consideration both versions as a whole, this study used the chi-squared test to analyze the data scientifically. *Repetitio,* as the most frequently applied category, was more common in the non-official subtitles, in comparison to the official versions, which can be indicative of the inclination of Iranian fan-subbers toward literal translation. Regarding the high frequency of this category, it is worth pointing out that in the filmic discourse, the audience is involuntarily deciphering a whole set of verbal and non-verbal codes which facilitate understanding of the whole context. Thus, providing a full translation each and every time does not seem to be a prerequisite for successful subtitling (see 4.1.). The results of the chi-squared test, as shown in Table 3, indicate that all the cells have an expected count of less than 5, which proves that the two sets are not the same, and are statistically correlated.

Table 24.  *Chi-squared Test of Repetitio: 81 cells (100.0%) have an expected count of less than 5.*

|  | Value | df | Asymptotic Significance (2-sided) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 72.000[a] | 64 | .230 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 39.550 | 64 | .993 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 7.159 | 1 | .007 |
| N of Valid Cases | 9 |  |  |

As the second frequently applied category, *Detractio* was more frequent in official subtitles in comparison to the non-official ones. In this study, official subtitles applied deletion strategy more frequently in order to affiliate with the reduction requirement of the subtitles, while non-official subtitles adopted condensed forms more frequently. The high frequency of this category in comparison to *Adiectio* category might be indicative of subtitlers' general awareness of temporal and spatial constraints, which leads into a certain amount of reduction. The following chi-squared test proves that the two sets of the data under study were significantly different.

*Table 25.  Chi-squared Test of Detractio: 81 cells (100.0%) have an expected count of less than 5.*

| Chi-Square Tests | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Value** | **df** | **Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)** |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 72.000[a] | 64 | .230 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 39.550 | 64 | .993 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 4.644 | 1 | .031 |
| N of Valid Cases | 9 | | |

Being situated in the third rank, the *Transmutatio* category was more frequent in the official subtitles in comparison to the non-official ones. Such an inclination might be a result of the necessity for a more fluent reading in official subtitles since they are broadcast to the layman, although it cannot be claimed that all the instances are necessarily more fluent. The result showed that specification (as a sub-strategy of dislocation) was the most frequent strategy in the official subtitles, while the non-official subtitles took advantages of generalization (as a sub-strategy of dislocation) much more frequently. This tendency may shed light on the expectations of the subtitlers and their assumptions about the audience's level of understanding in the two trends. According to Table 5, the expected count in 64 cells is less than 5, which proves that the difference between the two sets is significantly different.

*Table 26.  Chi-squared Test of Transmutatio 64 cells (100.0%) have an expected count less than 5.*

| Chi-Square Tests | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Value** | **df** | **Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)** |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 54.000[a] | 49 | .289 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 34.005 | 49 | .949 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 6.243 | 1 | .012 |
| N of Valid Cases | 9 | | |

Official subtitles have the *Adiectio* category as their 4th most applied strategy but in the non-official subtitles, the *Adiectio* category was the least frequent one. This indicates that while official subtitles are more condensed, they are still more expanded in comparison to non-official versions. In both versions, addition of *emphasis marker* was the most frequently added element. Table 6 shows that the

chi-squared test proves the two sets have a meaningful distribution of instances in the case of this strategy.

Table 27.  *Chi-squared Test of Adiectio: 64 cells (100.0%) have an expected count of less than 5.*

| Chi-Square Tests | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Value | Df | Asymptotic Significance (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 56.250[a] | 49 | .222 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 34.005 | 49 | .949 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | .977 | 1 | .323 |
| N of Valid Cases | 9 | | |

As the least frequent subtitling strategy in official subtitling and the 4th most frequent strategy in non-official ones. In case of paraphrase, both versions tended to render idiomatic expression to non-idiomatic expressions. On the other hand, moral issues were found to be modified more often than other sensitive issues in the official subtitles. In the non-official version, only four instances of modification of moral, political, and religious issues were identified, which might be considered as instances of self-censorship and how subtitlers may be slightly inclined towards compliance with dictated norms and regularities, regardless of lack of screening. The chi-squared test showed that 64 cells have an expected frequency of less than 5. Hence, the two trends proved to be significantly different in applying this strategy.

Table 28.  *Chi-squared Test of Substitutio: 64 cells (100.0%) have an expected count of less than 5.*

| Chi-Square Tests | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Value | Df | Asymptotic Significance (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 54.000[a] | 49 | .289 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 34.005 | 49 | .949 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 3.805 | 1 | .051 |
| N of Valid Cases | 9 | | |

## 6.  Concluding remarks

The descriptive method has the best potential for studying the regularities of behavior and strategies; thus, the current research was carried out within such

a framework to answer the research questions. This research aimed to find out the significant trends in the choice of the strategies applied in the two modes of subtitling. Hence, while taking into account the emergence of MMT, this study analyzed the two versions of 9 subtitled movies to answer the following questions:

**Research Question 1**: What is the most common strategy used in official subtitles?
**Research Question 2**: What is the most common strategy used in non-official subtitles?
**Research Question 3**: Do the results show that the two types of subtitles are related?

Subsequently, a null hypothesis was formulated in relation to research question 3:

**Null Hypothesis:** The two trends under study are independent and there is no relationship between these two variables.

As the results show, the subtitling trends under study follow different paths of normative behavior and it was observed that different strategies were applied to one linguistic-audiovisual segment. In both versions, transfer was the most frequently applied strategy, though its distribution in these two version was significantly different.

With reference to the chi-square tests mentioned in section 5, the null hypothesis is rejected and the results show that the two trends of subtitling are significantly different in the application of the strategies and they were calculated to be statistically correlated.

There also exist some further issues which must be taken into account when dealing with these two trends of subtitling. First, as official subtitles are accredited to certain companies, subtitlers might be motivated toward producing more professional subtitles and less literal renderings to create dynamic equivalence. On the other hand, non-official subtitles are created by anonymous subtitlers, which might give them deniability. This might affect the quality of subtitles and cause the fansubbers not to search for creative choices and settle for a literal rendering. Another important factor is the working conditions of non-official subtitlers or fansubbers who are mostly free of charge. Furthermore, audiovisual companies, as professional agents, are required to follow specific guidelines and quality standards. This causes official subtitlers to operate in a specific framework while non-official subtitlers may not have devised specific guideline to follow, or if they do, they might be individually defined ones. Official subtitlers have probably acquired some educational or professional background to meet qualifications required for job application, but non-official subtitlers mostly do subtitling as a hobby or for personal or maybe pedagogical purposes. All these considerations

significantly affect the choices made by the subtitlers, which are not necessarily an outcome of the political and ideological system.

As a conclusion, the results of this research yield some insights on how subtitlers operate in the audiovisual media. Thus, the collected data might be helpful for researchers who wish to investigate the normative translational behavior of the two prevalent subtitling trends in Iran; and may thus contribute to the improvement of film translation in general, and subtitling in particular. In retrospect, through using the data and findings of this study, further investigations can be carried out with regard to the practice of fansubbers and the way they operate in a confined space.

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# Respeaking crisis points. An exploratory study into critical moments in the respeaking process

**Abstract:** In this paper we introduce respeaking crisis points (RCPs), understood as potentially problematic moments in the respeaking process, resulting from the difficulty of the source material and/or cognitive overload on the part of the respeakers. We present results of the respeaking study on Polish participants who respoke four videos intralingually (Polish to Polish) and one interlingually (from English to Polish). We measured the participants' cognitive load with EEG (Emotiv) using two measures: concentration and frustration. By analysing peaks in both EEG measures, we show where respeaking crisis points occurred. Features that triggered RCPs include very slow and very fast speech rate, visual complexity of the material, overlapping speech, numbers and proper names, speaker changes, word play, syntactic complexity, and implied meaning. The results of this study are directly applicable to respeaker training and provide valuable insights into the respeaking process from the cognitive perspective.

**Keywords:** respeaking; live subtitling; respeaking crisis points; cognitive load; audiovisual translation

## 1. Introduction

Respeaking, also known as voice-writing, is a method of producing live subtitles using speech recognition software (Lambourne 2006, Romero Fresco 2011). A respeaker listens to the original utterance in a live TV programme and repeats or rephrases the text if necessary, adding punctuation marks. Respeaker's spoken words are automatically turned into written text by speech-to-text software and displayed as subtitles with a delay of a few seconds. The main target audience of respoken subtitles are people who are deaf or hard of hearing, but in reality the group of recipients of subtitling is much more numerous and diverse, and includes for instance foreigners and language learners (Vanderplank 2013) as well as viewers in noisy environments like pubs or train stations.

While the vast majority of live subtitling produced with respeaking is intra-lingual, that is within the same language, respeaking can also be used to translate between different languages (den Boer 2001). Respeaking can thus be considered a type of either intra- or interlingual translation.

Regardless of the language combination, there are moments in the respeaking process – just like in the traditionally conceived translation – that are more difficult than others. Among the most problematic issues are fast speech rates of original speakers, high information density of the original text, overlapping speech in the case of multiple speakers, syntactic or pronunciation errors as well as poor quality of the transmission (Eugeni 2009, Romero Fresco 2011). Some genres are considered more difficult than others to respeak, for instance sports is thought to be easier than news or chat shows (Romero Fresco 2011). To the best of our knowledge, no previous study, however, has empirically verified these assumptions, which are the result of practical experience of researchers and respeakers rather than of experimental research into cognitive aspects of the respeaking process.

Although live subtitling through respeaking has been used in several countries since 2001, the actual empirical research conducted on respeaking so far has had a largely applied character and has mainly focused on developments in error analysis and accuracy rate of respoken subtitles (see Eugeni 2009, Lambourne 2013, Martínez & Lopez 2013, Romero Fresco 2011, Romero Fresco 2013), the quality of respoken text (Romero Fresco 2009, Romero Fresco & Martínez Pérez 2015, Martínez Pérez 2015), the reduction of text in live respoken subtitles (Luycks 2010, Sandrelli 2013), the reception of respoken subtitles (Eugeni 2008, Romero Fresco 2011) and the training of respeakers (Arumí Ribas & Romero Fresco 2008, Romero Fresco 2012, Eugeni 2008c).

In this paper we experimentally test difficult moments in the respeaking process, focussing on what we term 'respeaking crisis points' (RCPs). Our theoretical point of departure is the notion of 'crisis points', as defined by Lörscher (1991) and later discussed by a number of translation studies scholars (see Remael & Vercauteren 2010, Pedersen 2015). Translation crisis points can be thought of as stumbling blocks in the translation process. According to Lörscher (1991), 'translation crisis points' are "points in translation where the translator has to abandon his/her automated processed and resort to strategic behaviour". In the same vein as Lörscher (1991), Mazur (2013) and the ADlab project team (http://www.adlabproject.eu) talk about 'audio description crisis points', identifying critical moments in audio description and the strategies that could be used by audio describers. When examining crisis points, so far authors tended to focus mainly on the strategies used by translators and audio describers in tackling those difficult moments and trying to overcome the difficulties they pose.

Before we can talk about strategies to deal with difficult moments in respeaking, however, we need to first establish where those difficult moments occur. We therefore examine respeaking crisis points, which we understand as moments in respeaking when the respeaker is faced with a difficulty of some sort. RCPs can be thought of as stumbling blocks, or – as put by Gile (2009, p. 171) – "problem triggers", forcing the respeaker to expend a larger cognitive effort to perform a task, which in turn may result in a longer pause in the respeaker's output and/or a drop in the respeaker's performance. We believe that RCPs may be caused by cognitive overload related to the difficulty of the task as well as to the respeaker's competences. In what follows we examine two cognitive load indicators during the respeaking process with a view to identifying RCPs.

## 2. How to measure respeaking crisis points?

We believe that RCPs may result from an excessive cognitive load experienced by respeakers during a respeaking task. Cognitive load, or mental load, as it is sometimes referred to (see e.g. Xie and Salvendy 2000), is "the load imposed on working memory by the cognitive processes" (Antonenko et al. 2010, p. 426). Cognitive load is a complex notion, comprised of many elements of multifaceted nature. In their Subjective Workload Assessment Technique (SWAT), Reid and Nygren (1988) divide the load into three components: time load, mental-effort load and psychological-stress load. In the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Task Load Index (NASA-TLX), Hart and Staveland (1988) distinguish as many as six components of cognitive load: mental demand, physical demand, temporal demand, performance, frustration, and effort. In this study, we focus on mental effort, operationalised as concentration, and on psychological-stress load, operationalised as frustration.

The notion of cognitive load can be approached from two perspectives: task-oriented, where the load stems from the characteristics of the task, and human-oriented, where cognitive load is conceived of in terms of the effects that performing a task induces on a participant. In this study, we combine both approaches: by analysing participants' concentration and frustration (human orientation), we aim to find which characteristics of the respeaking task were most challenging (task orientation).

Cognitive load can be measured using subjective techniques like rating scales with, and/or objective physiological techniques like electroencephalography (EEG). Rating scales usually rely on the participants assessing the overall cognitive load they experienced when performing a task. However, as argued by Xie and Salvendy (2000), overall load measured through rating scales used in many

studies is inadequate as it does not make it possible to study fluctuations in cognitive load over time, i.e. at particular points in time when carrying out the task. Instead of rating scales, according to Antonenko et al. (2010: 425), EEG can be used "as a physiological index that can serve as an online, continuous measure of cognitive load detecting subtle fluctuations in instantaneous load". In this study, we used EEG to examine peaks and drops in cognitive load over time during different respeaking tasks. Although the analysis below is based on numerical data derived from EEG, our approach is largely qualitative as we are mainly interested in identifying and discussing RCPs from a linguistic and translation perspective.

## 3. Method

Departing from the hypothesis that respeaking crisis points may be caused by cognitive overload related to the characteristics of the task, we examined two EEG indicators of cognitive load: concentration and frustration. Concentration, also sometimes referred to as 'engagement', is defined as "the conscious direction of attention towards task-relevant stimuli" (Emotiv 2014, p. 31). It is detected by increased presence of beta waves in the brain alongside with attenuated alpha waves. "The greater the attention, focus and cognitive workload, the greater the output source reported by the detection" (Emotiv 2014, p. 31). Frustration is defined as a negative feeling of annoyance. All the parameters are measured on a scale from 0 to 1; the higher the score, the more concentrated/frustrated a participant is.

We hypothesised that respeaking crisis points may occur during peaks in concentration and frustration. A peak is here understood as a moment in which the indicator measured (concentration and/or frustration) was larger by at least two standard deviations (SD) from the mean for that person in that clip.

Participants' brain activity was measured with the frequency of 128 Hz (every 8 ms). We divided the results into 10-second time intervals and looked whether there were any peaks in each interval. If at least one peak was found for at least 10 participants in that interval, we manually examined that moment in the clip in terms of its textual, audio and visual content with a view to finding the cause for the peak, and by extension, for the respeaking crisis point.

### 3.1 Participants

A total of 57 people (50 women, 7 men) participated in the study. Their mean age was 27.48 (SD=5.71), ranging from 21 to 51.

Because at the time this study was conducted, respeaking in Poland was still in infancy, there were no professional respeakers we could recruit. We therefore

trained the participants during two-day workshops carried out by professional respeaker trainers from Switzerland, UK, and Italy. Participants were divided into three groups: professional interpreters and interpreting trainees (N=22), translators and translation trainees (N=23) and people with no experience in either translation or interpreting (N=12), but fluent in English.

Due to incomplete or missing EEG data in some clips and participants (no variation recorded in at least one of the measured indices), the final sample analysed in this paper was: 11 subjects in the interpreter group, 11 subjects in the translator group and 7 participants in the control group.

## 3.2 Procedure

Participants were tested individually in a research lab (see Fig. 1). They were seated at a distance of about 60 cm from the monitor. Their brain activity was monitored using Emotiv EPOC EEG headset with the frequency of 128 Hz. Another laptop with a custom-built software (Prompter) was used to record the two synchronised audio channels (the original speech and the respeaker's output).

*Figure 1. Experimental set-up in the respeaking test. (photograph by Agnieszka Szarkowska)*

The speech recognition software used in this study was Newton Dictate for the Polish language (version 4.0) manufactured by Newton Technologies. Participants created their own voice profiles during the respeaking workshops, and these profiles were later used in the respeaking test.

Prior to commencing the study, all participants signed informed consent forms. The respeaking test began with the procedure being explained to the participants. Then, EEG calibration was performed. After the calibration, participants went through a mock respeaking task to familiarise themselves with the procedure (the data for this part were not recorded). In the main part of the experiment, participants were asked to respeak intralingually four Polish videos, whose order was randomised, and finally, to respeak one video interlingually from English to Polish. After the respeaking tasks, participants were asked about how they assess particular tasks in a semi-structured interview.

### 3.3  Materials

5 clips of different genres from Polish TV channels were used in the study (see Table 1): news (*Fakty* evening news broadcast on private television channel TVN, reporting on miners' protests, fast-paced with a number of speakers, but no overlapping speech), political chat show (an excerpt from *Kropka nad i* on TVN, fast-paced with numerous cases of overlapping speech), entertainment chat show (*Fakty po Faktach* on TVN24 with an actress and a film critic discussing the movie *Ida* after it was awarded an Oscar for best foreign language film, medium-paced) and two speeches, a New Year's address by Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz televised by public television TVP1 and an excerpt from President Obama's speech at the Castle Square in Warsaw celebrating the 25th anniversary of free elections in Poland, a broadcast by public service broadcaster TVP1. Both speeches were slow-paced with one speaker and no overlapping speech. Each video to be respoken lasted about 5 minutes. Four clips were in Polish and President Obama's speech was in English.

*Table 1.  Characteristics of the clips used in the study*

|  | Duration | Number of words | Speech rate | Number of sentences |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Intralingual** |  |  |  |  |
| Speech | 4:47 | 520 | 108 wpm | 40 |
| News | 6:10 | 935 | 152 wpm | 99 |
| Entertainment show | 5:20 | 707 | 133 wpm | 74 |
| Political chat show | 5:35 | 916 | 165 wpm | 107 |
| **Interlingual** |  |  |  |  |
| Speech | 4:55 | 458 | 94 wpm | 35 |

## 4. Results and discussion

### 4.1 Overall results

Table 2 presents the number of peaks in concentration and frustration in each clip. The highest number of peaks was found in the fast intralingual clips (news and political chat show), while the clip with the lowest number of peaks was the interlingual one, which was the slowest of all the clips in terms of speech rate (see Table 1). This may suggest an importance of the speech rate in respeaking.

*Table 2. Number of peaks per clip*

|  | Frustration | Concentration |
|---|---|---|
| 1-speaker slow (speech) | 118 | 123 |
| Many speakers slow (entertainment chat show) | 148 | 144 |
| 1-speaker fast (news) | 140 | 205 |
| Many speakers fast (political chat show) | 206 | 207 |

Generally, peaks in frustration and concentration frequently occurred side by side. The only exception being the news, which required more concentration without inducing frustration in many participants. Highest frustration was found in the fast clip with overlapping speech.

### 4.2 RCPs in intralingual respeaking

Below we report on respeaking crisis points as measured by peaks in concentration and frustration in four different genres in intralingual Polish-to-Polish respeaking.

In all clips, frequent peaks were found at the beginning of the videos. According to Emotiv (2014, p. 31), events which "result in a peak in the detection are difficult tasks requiring concentration, discovering something new, and entering a new area". This is in line with our findings, where participants experienced higher concentration when embarking on a new task.

### 4.2.1 *Speech*

This video was a speech, delivered by former Polish Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz at the end of 2014. As is usually done on such occasions, the Prime Minister was reading out a pre-scripted text from a prompter. There were no camera movements; the figure of the PM was in the centre of the screen in medium and medium close-up shots. This type of speech is characterised by high lexical density, low

redundancy with few oral features, and highly structured content, which makes it difficult to respeak and to edit information out without losing important meaning.

*Proper names and numbers*. Concentration peaks were found in fragments containing proper names and numbers, such as dates (see Example 1 below). Increased occurrence of peaks may be an indication of a higher demand on working memory, and in consequence, of higher cognitive load experienced by respeakers.

1)   W dwa tysiące czternastym roku podczas uroczystych obchodów siedemdziesiątej piątej rocznicy wybuchu drugiej wojny światowej i siedemdziesiątej rocznicy wybuchu powstania warszawskiego oraz bitwy o Monte Casino oddaliśmy hołd odwadze i bohaterstwu Polaków.

     *In two thousand fourteen, during ceremonial celebrations of the seventy fifth anniversary of the outbreak of World War Two and the seventieth anniversary of the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising and the Battle of Monte Casino, we paid tribute to the courage and heroism of Poles.*

Numbers and proper names are sometimes referred to as 'non-contextual information', i.e. information that cannot be inferred or predicted from the context (Chmiel 2015, p. 235). They are usually elements of low redundancy (Gile 1984), low predictability (Braun and Clarici 1996) and high informative content (Alessandrini 1990). As stated by Jones (1998, p. 130), "numbers have an objective meaning and are in no way open to linguistic interpretation". As suggested in interpreting literature (Mazza 2001, p. 91, Braun and Clarici 1996), one possible way of releasing the load on working memory is to note the numbers down. In our study, we did not allow the participants to make notes, as it is not typically done in respeaking. Another method the participants could use to tackle increased cognitive load, as suggested by Mazza (2001), was to reduce décalage, or ear-voice span (EVS). In other words, they could unload their working memory by saying the numbers as soon as possible after the speaker (Jones 2002). While this method enables shorter retention of a unit of information in working memory, it also requires faster processing and production. Another strategy, frequently used in interpreting, is to generalise the number and focus on the order of magnitude rather than details (Jones 2002; Shlesinger 2000). Allocating too many attentional resources to processing numbers, as noted by Shlesinger (2000), may result in the spill-over effect, whereby the interpreter, or the respeaker, will be forced to lose some information in the chunk of meaning that follows. This was indeed sometimes the case in our study, where some participants got lost in the dates and lost track of the following parts of the sentence.

*Implied meaning*. Concentration peaks were also found when the original speaker used some implied meaning, as shown in Example 2:

2)  Znaczenie Polski na arenie międzynarodowej zostało także potwierdzone nominacją <u>naszego rodaka</u> na <u>jedną z najważniejszych funkcji</u> w Unii Europejskiej.

*The importance of Poland on the international scene was also confirmed by the nomination of <u>our compatriot</u> on <u>one of the most important posts</u> in the European Union.*

In this utterance, a reference is made to Donald Tusk, President of the European Council. The speaker used the words 'our compatriot' instead of Donald Tusk, and 'one of the most important functions of the EU' instead of stating explicitly what the function is. While respeaking, some participants employed the explicitation strategy (see Klaudy 2009) by replacing the implied terms with the name 'Donald Tusk' and 'the President of the European Council' or 'the EU President', respectively. The processing necessary to perform this operation probably required higher mental effort (concentration), as shown by the peaks in EEG, and allows us to classify such situations as RCPs.

*Long and complex sentences.* As opposed to impromptu utterances, a typical feature of pre-scripted speech are long sentences with embedded clauses, some of which raised problems in respeaking, as shown by peaks in concentration in the example below:

3)  Proces integracji europejskiej i obecność Polski w NATO pomogły w wykorzystaniu wielkiego potencjału naszego kraju, który od lat kroczy drogą szybkiej modernizacji i ciągłego rozwoju, dając przy tym obywatelom poczucie bezpieczeństwa.

*The process of European integration and the presence of Poland in NATO helped to make use of the great potential of our country, which has been following the path of swift modernization and continuous growth for years, granting its citizens with a sense of safety.*

The high propositional density of such sentences, together with its complex syntactic structure and short duration of pauses in the delivery may result in a respeaking crisis point. A possible strategy to deal with a RCP of this type is, as suggested by Romero Fresco (2011, p. 110), to use the salami technique (see also Jones 2002): respeakers can 'chop' and 'slice up' original sentences, making them shorter and simpler. According to Jones (2002, p. 104), "the salami technique can help with such Russian doll-like sentences with subordinate clauses". It is also a good solution from the point of view of live subtitling – the end product of respeaking – given that long sentences are difficult to read, particularly considering the lack of perfect subtitle-to-image synchrony in live subtitling.

### 4.2.2 News

News programmes are characterised by high speech rates, high lexical density, highly structured content, and low redundancy. As such, they are quite demanding

for respeakers. Unlike in the case of the speech discussed above, there are more speakers in the news programme than just the main news presenter (though not speaking at the same time): live reporter, interviewees, etc. The lines spoken by journalists are usually accompanied by supporting images and, sometimes very loosely connected, footage (see Romero Fresco 2011, p. 126), which makes news programmes more complex and cognitively demanding to respeak than speech.

*Visual complexity.* Among a number of issues that triggered an increased occurrence of concentration peaks, which we interpret are RCPs, were moments when complex visual material was presented in the programme, such as information graphics or split screen (see Fig. 2).

*Figure 2.  Example of split screen in the news programme (TVN "Fakty")*



This was the case with a report on negotiations related to a crisis in the Polish mining industry. At one point, apart from the national government officials talking with miners, another meeting was held between local government officials from regions where the protests were taking place. The fact that there were two parallel meetings and the issue who spoke with whom, combined with the split screen showing footage from the two meetings, turned out to require increased concentration in many participants and can be classified as a respeaking crisis point:

4) Co prawda nie było trzaskania drzwiami i żadna ze stron nie zerwała rozmów, ale trudno mówić o jakimkolwiek postępie. Bo premier wspierana przez swoich ministrów przyszła z gotową propozycją i zaczęła negocjacje od tego, że jej nie zmieni. Jak widać, w pewnym momencie były już nawet dwa równoległe spotkania, bo oprócz spotkania górników z rządem rozmawiali samorządowcy, prezydenci i burmistrzowie z rejonów, gdzie dziś protestują górnicy pracujący jeszcze w szkole w kopalniach z rządowej listy kopalń nierentownych.

*Although there was no door slamming and none of the parties decided to break the talks, it's hard to talk of any progress because the prime minister accompanied by her ministers came to the meeting with a ready-made proposal and started the negotiations by saying that she wouldn't change it. As you can see, at some point there were even two simultaneous meetings, as, apart from the meeting between the miners and the government, talks were also held between the local government politicians and mayors of cities and towns from the areas where the miners who still work in companies which are on government's list of unprofitable mines are protesting today.*

This points to a possible increase in cognitive load, as the incoming input was becoming more complex, respeakers had to concentrate more to make sense of the multiple sources of information they were exposed to.

*Speaker changes and change in delivery.* A number of concentration peaks were found in the moment of speaker changes, especially with speakers other than the news anchor, as illustrated by Ex. 5 and 6. RCPs may have also been also related to a poorer quality of sound and different accents of people being interviewed by the reporter.

5) U nas w biurze padł pomysł. Choinka, spróbujemy tę kopalnię wziąć sami. W pięć osób założyliśmy firmę pod nazwą Przedsiębiorstwo Górnicze Silesia. Nie mieliśmy żadnego doświadczenia.

*At our office, we had this idea. It's Christmas, let's try to run this mine ourselves. There were five of us and we set up a company called Przedsiębiorstwo Górnicze Silesia [Silesia mining enterprise]. We didn't have any experience.*

6) Na początku nie miał kto dla nas pracować. Ściągaliśmy ludzi z firm górniczych. Ściągaliśmy ludzi z ulicy. I ci ludzie, którzy tu zostali, namawiali na przyjście do pracy, na obdarzenie zaufaniem. Teraz sytuacja jest taka, że to ludzie przychodzą do nas do pracy, a my już mamy komplet.

*At first, we didn't have enough people who could work for us. We were hiring people from other mining companies. We were hiring people from the street. And the people who stayed with us persuaded others to come to work for us, to place their trust in us. Now the situation is different. There're are people who come and ask about jobs but we already have a full set of staff.*

Such impromptu speech constituted a change in information density, redundancy, speech rate, and sound quality from the main news presenter. Talking about the difficulties of a news report given by a correspondent live, Romero Fresco (2011, p. 128), explains that "it has not been prepared in advance […], so features of higher grammatical intricacy (with more features of orality), lower lexical density (the content being less condensed), a slower speech rate and often poor quality of transmission. The challenge here is to understand the source text and turn its oral nature into written subtitles".

*Numbers.* Similarly to speech, peaks were also found in the case of numbers in the news programme, as shown in examples below.

7)  Kopalnia pracuje <u>dwadzieścia cztery</u> godziny na dobę, <u>siedem</u> dni w tygodniu.

    *The mine operates <u>twenty four</u> hours a day, <u>seven</u> days a week.*

8)  Nie mamy co prawda czternastki, ona jest uzależniona od wyniku finansowego.

    *Even though we don't get a <u>fourteenth</u> salary, which depends on the financial results.*

*Info graphics with numbers.* Numbers were not only used in the original spoken text, but sometimes they were also present in information graphics on the screen, as was the case with Ex. 9.

9)  Ewa Kopacz musi się także liczyć z tym, że zdecydowanie większe poparcie w tym sporze mają górnicy niż jej rząd. W sondażu dla Faktów i TVN24 przytłaczająca większość, <u>68 procent</u> badanych, stoi po stronie protestujących. Tylko <u>15 procent</u> popiera tu Ewę Kopacz.

    *Ewa Kopacz must take into account that the miners have a far greater social support than her government. According to a poll conducted for Fakty and TVN24, the overwhelming majority, <u>68 per cent</u> of the respondents, backs up the protesters. Only <u>15 per</u> cent support Ewa Kopacz.*

Another factor, which was mentioned by some of the participants later in the post-test semi-structured interview, was the fact that the info graphic differed slightly (68.5%) from the text that was read by the news presenter (68%) (see Fig. 3).

*Figure 3.  Info graphics with numbers from the news programme (TVN "Fakty")*



Here, the two channels of information: visual and auditory, instead of being complementary and redundant, may have been the source of slight confusion. Such situations can be classified as respeaking crisis points, as they triggered peaks in both concentration and in frustration. One possible strategy to deal with numbers is to use approximation, i.e. rounding the number up or down, respecting the order of magnitude (Mazza 2001). Indeed, this is what we observed here, as most participants decided to respeak 68 per cent, and not 68.5 per cent.

*Syntactic complexity.* We found both concentration and frustration peaks in the following fragment featuring journalist off-screen narration illustrated with footage of coal train (not much related).

10)  I właśnie wtedy [adverbial of time], zupełnie jak w filmie [adverbial of manner], garstka ludzi niemająca niczego, a już na pewno niczego do stracenia [subject complement], postanowiła wziąć sprawy w swoje ręce.

*And just then* [adverbial of time]*, as if in a movie* [adverbial of manner]*, a bunch of people who had nothing, and certainly nothing to lose* [subject complement]*, decided to take the matter into their own hands.*

A closer syntactic analysis of this sentence shows its atypical grammatical structure. The sentence contains as many as three grammatical inserts, i.e. adverbials of time and manner as well as subject complement. As noted by Gile (2009, p. 296), "embedded structures, in particular, seem to impose increased pressure on the comprehender". They may disrupt the flow of the sentence, adding extra information. At the same time, owing to space and time limitations, these elements are

typically omitted in subtitling. Aware of those limitations, respeakers may have noticed them and strove to remove them.

### 4.2.3  Entertainment programme

This programme was a fragment of *Fakty po faktach*, an interview between an actress Grażyna Szapołowska and a film critic Tomasz Raczek, following the 2015 Oscars ceremony where a Polish film *Ida* won in the best foreign language film. The show featured live slow-rate spontaneous dialogue, which was unscripted, and contained typical features of spoken language like hesitations, false starts, repetitions, and a higher level of redundancy compared to speeches and news programmes.

*Proper names.* Similarly to previous tasks, we found concentration peaks in the case of proper names (Ex. 11–12).

11)  Fakty po Faktach. Justyna Pochanke, witam państwa gorąco. Grażyna Szapołowska, Tomasz Raczek, czyli goście warci Oskara.

   *Fakty po Faktach [Facts after Facts, a name of a current affairs chat show] Justyna Pochanke, a warm welcome to all of you. Grażyna Szapołowska, Tomasz Raczek, guests worthy of an Oscar.*

12)  „Musiał przyjechać facet z Oksfordu, żebyśmy dostali tego Oscara", tak powiedziała Agnieszka Holland o Pawle Pawlikowskim.

   *"A guy from Oxford had to come so that we could get this Oscar," that's what Agnieszka Holland said about Paweł Pawlikowski.*

*Spoken language.* Another area, typical of unscripted speech, where we found peaks were elements of spoken language, particularly false starts and reformulations, as shown in Ex. 13–14.

13)  Tak, tak, ale pewnie ten jego taki… ta jego światowość wypływa stąd, że spędził większość życia na Zachodzie.

   *Right, right, but probably his… this worldliness of his comes from the fact that he spent most of his life in the West.*

14)  Zastanawiam się, wspomniał pan, panie Tomaszu, ten deszcz nagród… Historia „Idy" to była historia biegu z przeszkodami tak naprawdę.

   *I wonder, Tomasz, you mentioned this rain of awards… The story of "Ida" is really a story of an obstacle race.*

Here, the respeaking problem consisted in a dilemma which strategy to choose: either follow the speaker closely and fall into the short décalage trap, by repeating the unfinished sentences, or wait longer for a speaker to complete a sentence,

thus increasing the burden on working memory and the ear-voice span. Given that the end product of respeaking is subtitling, where unnecessary elements of spoken language with no propositional value tend to be omitted (see Díaz Cintas & Remael 2007), it seems that a better strategy would be to increase the EVS and wait for the speaker to complete their utterance.

*Word play.* Another fragment which induced peaks in frustration and concentration, and may therefore be classified as a potential RCP, was an instance of word play (Ex. 15). When discussing the success of *Ida* directed by Paweł Pawlikowski, the speakers emphasised that the director is not considered to be Polish, as he spent many years in the UK, where he had already established his position as an independent film-maker.

15) – Łatwiej jest nakręcić oscarowy film, niż z nim się <u>przebić</u> w Stanach. Jak się <u>przebili</u>?
    – Ja myślę, że on nie jest traktowany tak do końca jako reżyser polski. Paweł Pawlikowski jest już <u>przebity</u>. On się <u>przebił</u> jako twórca brytyjski.

    – *It is easier to make a movie worthy of an Oscar than it is to actually get it noticed in the [United] States. How did they get noticed?*
    – *I think he is not considered to be a Polish director. Paweł Pawlikowski has already been noticed. He was noticed as a British filmmaker.*

The speakers used various grammatical forms of the word 'przebijać się' ('to make it', 'to be noticed'), one of which was a neologism past participle ('przebity'). It is possible that the respeakers had to expend extra processing effort to be able to repeat all the instances of this word, as substituting it with a synonym or paraphrasing it would probably not work best in this case.

## 4.2.4 Political chat show

The video was a fragment of a political chat show *Kropka nad i* by a famous journalist Monika Olejnik, where she interviewed with two politicians: left-wing Kazimiera Szczuka of *Your Movement* and right-wing Przemysław Wipler from *The Congress of the New Right*. As declared by the participants in the post-test interview, this video was the most difficult one to respeak owing to overlapping speech and fast speech rates. It also had the highest number of peaks among all of the videos in the test.

*Proper names.* Again, proper names turned out to be problematic, as they also triggered peaks in frustration (Ex. 16–17):

16)  Jeżeli pan będzie wyciągał te stare rzeczy, to mogę powiedzieć, że dzisiaj na listach
     <u>Twojego Ruchu</u> jest <u>Anna Grodzka</u>[1], <u>Robert Biedroń</u>[2].

     *If you keep bringing up those old things, then I can say that today <u>Twój Ruch</u> [a political*
     *party] has <u>Anna Grodzka</u> and <u>Robert Biedroń</u> on its lists.*

17)  To tyle <u>Korwin-Mikke</u>[3]. I o <u>Hitlerze</u>, i o gwałcie. <u>Kazimiera Szczuka</u>.

     *That's what <u>Korwin-Mikke</u> said. About <u>Hitler</u> and about rape. <u>Kazimiera Szczuka</u>.*

As noted by some participants in the post-test interview, some people had prob-
lems with the names, as they were not interested in politics, and were not famil-
iar with the names or events mentioned in the programme. In the professional
context – not a research study –, respeakers would have to prepare beforehand,
so this problem could at least partially be eliminated.

*Reactions to the content.* It is also possible that some peaks in frustration might
have been triggered by the sheer content of the discussion, which related to one
politician's highly controversial view on rape:

18)  – Czy pan uważa, że kobiety chcą być gwałcone? Dobrze zrozumiałam?
     – Co znaczy gwałcone? Co znaczy gwałcone? Kobiety zawsze udają, że pewien opór
       stawiają. To jest normalne chyba, nie?
     – Co to jest według pana gwałt?
     – Pokonywanie pewnego… bo trzeba wiedzieć kiedy można, kiedy nie można.

     – *Do you think that women want to be raped? Have I understood correctly?*
     – *What does it mean «raped»? What does it mean «raped»? Women always pretend*
       *some resistance. That's normal, right?*
     – *What is a rape according to you?*
     – *It's overcoming some… because you need to know when you can and when you can't.*

In the interview, some participants declared their lack of appreciation for this
political figure, which – together with the controversial content of the video – may
have affected their EEG frustration patterns.

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1  Anna Grodzka, born as Krzysztof Bęgowski, was the first openly transgender woman
   elected Member of the Polish Parliament in 2011.
2  Robert Biedroń is a LGBT activist and the first openly homosexual Member of the
   Polish Parliament, elected in 2011. He is now the mayor Słupsk, a town in northern
   Poland.
3  Korwin Mikke, a Polish politician and Member of the European Parliament, famous
   for his controversial views on women, the disabled, the Holocaust, and the EU, among
   others.

### 4.3 RCPs in interlingual respeaking

In order to find RCPs, we also examined one clip with interlingual English-to-Polish respeaking. The clip was a fragment of US President Barack Obama speaking at the 25th Anniversary of the Freedom Day in Warsaw in June 2014. In his speech[4], he made frequent references to Poland, its culture, history, historic figures as well as to the European situation back in 1989 after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the communist regimes across Eastern Europe.

Similarly to intralingual respeaking, we found frequent peaks at the very beginning of the clip, particularly in concentration. Increased concentration was also found in the case of Polish words pronounced by Obama with a strong American accent, as shown in Ex. 19–21:

19) The faithful come together at churches like <u>Saint Stanislaus Kostka</u>.

20) And every summer, we celebrate the Taste of Polonia, with our <u>kielbasa</u> and <u>pierogies</u>, and we're all a little bit Polish for that day.

21) The <u>Righteous Among the Nations</u>, among them <u>Jan Karski</u>, who risked all to save the innocent from the Holocaust.

Interestingly, frustration peaks were triggered when the speaker made long pauses in long sentences (Ex. 22–23), resulting in very low speech rates (roughly 90–100 wpm).

22) [00:33] Distinguished guests, [00:36] people of Poland, [00:40] thank you for your extraordinary welcome … and for the privilege of joining you here today… [00:46] I bring with me the greetings and friendship of the American people… [00:53] and of my hometown of Chicago… [00:55] home to so many proud Polish Americans… [01:01]

23) [02:01] The Communist regime thought an election would validate their rule… [02:06] or weaken the opposition… [02:10] Instead, Poles turned out in the millions… [02:14] And when the votes were counted… it was a landslide victory for freedom.[02:22]

This goes against the commonly held assumption that RCPs can be expected in material with a high speech rate. As noted by Alpbach with reference to interpreting, "slow input can disrupt processing as much as fast input" (1968, p. 2, cited after Pöchhacker 2004, p. 129). When talking about slow delivery of speeches, Gile (2009) also argues that "if it is too slow, information elements have to be kept

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4    The entire text of the speech can ba accessed here: https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/06/04/remarks-president-obama-25th-anniversary-freedom-day.

longer in short-term memory before they can be integrated into target speech sentences, which may cause cognitive saturation" (p. 200). In this case, the very slow speech rate of this clip was probably causing a lot of strain to the participants' working memory, which in turn could increase the cognitive load at this point in respeaking. This also shows another area of convergence between interpreting and respeaking.

Frustration peaks were also found in the case of historical and geographical references (Ex. 24). Some of them were not named directly, but only implied:

24) The victory of 1989 was not inevitable. It was the culmination of centuries of Polish struggle, at times in this very square. The generations of Poles who rose up and finally won independence.

25) The images of that year are seared in our memory.

First, as stated in the post-test semi-structured interview, not all the participants managed to understand the sentence in Ex. 24 and 25. Others had problems with the idiomatic expression 'seared in our memory' and struggled to find an appropriate phrasing in Polish, which increased the EVS and the load on the working memory, possibly resulting in cognitive load. The actual year that is being referred to in this sentence (1989) was not mentioned by Obama before in his speech. In the previous paragraph, he said: "twenty-five years ago", which was the only indication of the time period, apart from the participants' general knowledge. This may also have constituted another stumbling block for the participants. Those who did not manage to grasp the idea behind this sentence struggled with the next few sentences, as President Obama went on to give a few examples of the images from that year:

26) Citizens filling the streets of Budapest and Bucharest. Hungarians and Austrians cutting the barbed wire border. Protesters joining hands across the Baltics. Czechs and Slovaks in their Velvet Revolution. East Berliners climbing atop that wall.

These images can also be considered RCPs, as we registered peaks in frustration in EEG activity.

Some of the peaks may have stemmed from difficulties in translation. Since the participants did not know what material they were going to respeak, they could not prepare in advance for this task, as interpreters/translators would normally do. In the semi-structured interview after the respeaking test, a number of participants mentioned problems with finding the right equivalents to some English terms, mostly proper names, such as *the Righteous Among the Nations, the Velvet Revolution, the Baltics.*

Another problematic issue to translate was a delayed referent in Ex. 27:

27) Mister President, Mister Prime Minister, Madam Mayor, heads of state and government, past and present, including the man who jumped that shipyard wall to lead a strike that became a movement, the prisoner turned president who transformed this nation, thank you, <u>Lech Walesa</u>, for your outstanding leadership.

President Obama enumerated a few facts related to Lech Wałęsa, like jumping the shipyard wall, leading a strike, being prisoner and later becoming president, without actually stating his name until the end of the sentence. This long and syntactically complex sentence – combined with Obama's pronunciation of the name *Lech Wałęsa* – turned out quite difficult for the participants to respeak, which was also demonstrated by an increased the EVS between the original utterance and the respeaker's output.

## 5. Conclusion

In this paper we proposed the notion of respeaking crisis points and presented a number of examples where they can be found, based on the results of qualitative analysis of cognitive load based on EEG data.

We hope to have shown that EEG can be used to find peaks in concentration and frustration during the respeaking process, and as such, can be a useful tool to detect RCPs. Apart from examining peaks in EEG as cognitive load indicators, other measures that could potentially be used as indicators of RCPs are length of pauses in respeaker's output, fixation duration, and performance indicators.

Knowing were RCPs occur is important to understand the process of respeaking from a cognitive perspective. The results of this study can also inform respeaker training. Once we know what the crisis points are, we can examine the strategies which can be adopted to deal with them and have research-based evidence to inform respeaker training in terms of strategies to deal with RCPs.

In this study, we found a number of areas where RCPs can occur. One crucial factor conducive to RCP is the pace of the original dialogue: both very slow and very fast speech rate. Another factor is the number of speakers and overlapping speech – the more speakers talking simultaneously, the more difficult respeaking becomes, and the more frustration may be experienced by a respeaker. Other problematic issues include numbers and proper names, complex syntactical structures with embedded clauses, visual complexity of the material, speaker changes, word play and implied meaning.

It needs to be stressed that different people may experience different cognitive load in the same task. Training and experience can lead to developing expertise, which helps in reducing the load and improving the performance.

It is important to note that respeaking crisis points do not necessarily have to lead to actual problems or a drop in respeaking performance. Increased cognitive effort, for instance in concentration, may result in a respeaker continuing his/her performance on the same level, adopting a strategy s/he finds helpful at this point. One of the next steps in the respeaking process research could be to match RCPs with online performance indicators.

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# Old questions, new answers: computational stylistics in audiovisual translation research

**Abstract:** In our paper, we present a new research methodology devised for the purposes of an interdisciplinary project *Film Genre and Audiovisual Translation Strategies. A Case Study in Historical Film*, which combines stylometric analysis of the original and translated dialogues of historical productions with their in-depth qualitative analysis, to explore genre-specific strategies used by Anglophone screenwriters and Polish and Italian translators. First, we present the statistical methods used to analyse the original and translated dialogues of selected historical productions: cluster analysis of most frequent word frequencies, text length distribution and lexical density. Then, we comment on the most interesting results of our quantitative research, conducted on the parallel corpora of Anglophone, Polish and Italian dialogue lists and performed predominantly with *stylo* (Eder et al., 2013), a package for R, the statistical programming environment (R Core Team, 2014), later also postprocessed with Gephi network analysis software (Bastian et al., 2009). Thus, we wish to prove that computational stylistics can help verify preliminary assumptions concerning the presence/absence of authorial signal in the original scripts; genre and epoch signal in the English dialogues; cultural specificity of different audiovisual translation modes, as well as presence/absence of text-specific stylistic strategies, and may open up fascinating prospects for further qualitative research.

## 1. Introduction

The dynamic evolution of Digital Humanities has opened up new vistas for literary and textual analysis, and for media research. Computational methods have found application in such fields as plagiarism detection, authorship attribution, measuring stylistic affinities between literary works or tracing recurrent patterns in parallel corpora (e.g. Mosteller & Wallace, 1964; Burrows, 1987, 2002, 2006; Hoover, 2004, 2007; Rybicki, 2012; Eder, 2013; Jockers, 2013; Rybicki, 2015; for a most recent introduction, see Rybicki et al., 2016). These and similar approaches, when applied to large corpora, are best described by Franco Moretti's term, "distant reading" (Moretti, 2013) and have already proved useful in audiovisual translation research, as testified by such corpus-based projects as Pavia Corpus of Film Dialogue or Forlixt1 (Freddi & Pavesi, 2009, Baños et al., 2013; Pérez-González, 2014).

In our paper, we present a new interdisciplinary approach to screen dialogue in translation, developed for the purposes of our research project *Film Genre and Audiovisual Translation Strategies. A Case Study in Historical Film*.[1] Looking for an appropriate methodology to investigate filmic speech in historical fiction and its translation from English into Polish and Italian, we decided to combine quantitative (computational linguistic) with qualitative (comparative stylistic) analysis. Thereby, we hoped to re-address some of the well-known questions within the realm of audiovisual translation and pose new ones, specific to our research. Among the former, we aimed to investigate by computational means:

- the potential differences between voice-over translation, subtitling and dubbing in terms of text length and style;
- their linguistic and cultural specificity;
- the existence of textual-linguistic norms in Polish and Italian audiovisual translation.

Notably, we wished to pose these questions in a new context, which in our opinion deserves special attention in audiovisual translation research, i.e., the influence of film genre on dialogue-writing and screen translation practice. In our project, we focused on historical films and television series, because we expected dialogues to play a singular role in those works: authenticating the image of the past and rendering it both historically credible and emotionally relatable. We collected a large parallel corpus of Anglophone productions portraying selected epochs, together with their Polish and Italian translations, to check:

- whether the dialogues in historical genre indeed show unique characteristics which distinguish them from dialogues in other genres;
- whether screenwriters adapt their style to the requirements of historical fiction;
- whether original dialogues in films/series portraying particular epochs are stylistically similar or different;
- whether the stylistic strategies used by Polish and Italian translators differ depending on the audiovisual translation mode or remain uniform in a particular language and culture.

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## 2. Research methodology

To explore these issues and verify our intuitions, we subjected our corpus to computational stylistic analysis. These methods, also known as stylometry, were previously developed and used on other textual material, i.e. literary texts, for such purposes as plagiarism detection, authorship attribution, finding stylistic affinities between texts or recognising character idiolects in fiction. They are based on frequencies of linguistic features (words or *word lemmata*, i.e, words in their basic grammatical form) and attempt to find measures of distance, or difference, which enable identification of various stylometric signals: those of authorship, gender, genre, or chronology (Burrows, 1987; Jockers, 2013; Rybicki, 2015).

In our research, we applied advanced statistical methods, such as cluster analysis of most frequent word frequencies, performed with stylo (Eder et al., 2013, 2016), a package for R, the statistical programming environment (R Core Team, 2014), later postprocessed with Gephi network analysis software (Bastian et al., 2009). We also used simpler lexical measures, such as text length distribution or lexical density (i.e., vocabulary richness). Various visualisation tools were used to present the data, such as network analysis, consensus trees and box plots.

This paper presents the results of a computational study of an extended corpus of Anglophone dialogue lines belonging to different film genres and portraying different historical epochs. It subsequently focuses on the parallel corpus of dialogues from classical and contemporary cinema and television productions set in the Tudor Era[2]. It included Michael Curtiz's *The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex* (1939), Charles Jarrott's *Anne of Thousand Days* (1969), Showtime Network's series *The Tudors* (2007–8); Shekhar Kapur's *Elizabeth* (1998) and *Elizabeth. The Golden Age* (2007), Tom Hooper's HBO miniseries *Elizabeth I* (2005), Justin Chadwick's *The Other Boleyn Girl* (2008) and Peter Kosminsky's miniseries *Wolf Hall* (2015), as well as the available transcripts of their translations into Polish (voice-over, official and amateur subtitles, dubbing) and Italian (dubbing, official and amateur subtitles). A detailed list of productions and their foreign language versions is presented in *Table 1.*

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2   For the analysis of other subcorpora, see Agata Hołobut and Monika Woźniak's forthcoming monograph.

*Table 1. Film and television series included in the corpus, together with their available translations.*

| Production title | Pl V | Pl S | Pl Fs | Pl D | It D | It S | It Fs |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex (1939) | | | 1 | | | | |
| Anne of a Thousand Days (1969) | | 1 | | | 1 | | |
| Elizabeth (1998) | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Elizabeth I (2005) – miniseries | 1 | 1 | | | | 1 | |
| Elizabeth. Golden Age (2007) | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| The Tudors, Season 1 (2007) – series | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | 1 |
| The Tudors Season 2 (2008) – series | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| The Tudors Season 3 (2009) – series | | | | | | | 1 |
| The Tudors Season 4 (2010) – series | | | | | | | 1 |
| The Other Boleyn Girl (2008) | | | | | | 1 | |
| Wolf Hall (2015) – series | | | | | | | 1 |

*Notes. The consecutive columns present the availability of particular language versions in the corpus. These include: Polish voice-over (Pl V); Polish dubbing (Pl D); Polish subtitles (Pl S); Polish fansubs (PlFs); Italian Dubbing (It D); Italian Subtitles (It S) and Italian fansubs (It Fs), respectively.*

## 3.1 Author and genre signals

The first stage of our investigation consisted in a contrastive computational analysis of an extended corpus of Anglophone dialogue lines. It included the selected historical productions we intended to focus on in our subsequent qualitative research, together with other scripts authored by the same screenwriters, representing various genres. What we wanted to check is whether the authorial signal in filmic speech is as strong as in literary texts, where it tends to be so strong that the methods have been successfully used in plagiarism detection and authorship attribution (Mosteller & Wallace, 1864; Juola et al., 2006; Rybicki, 2015a). So, the most frequent word frequencies were compared for each of the dialogue lists. The texts were grouped by similarity using a statistical method called *cluster analysis*. The results were further visualised through *network analysis*, which presents an overall image of the patterns of similarity and difference between individual texts, as presented in *Figure 1*.

*Figure 1.  Cluster analysis of the multi-genre corpus of original dialogue lists colour-coded according to their authors.*
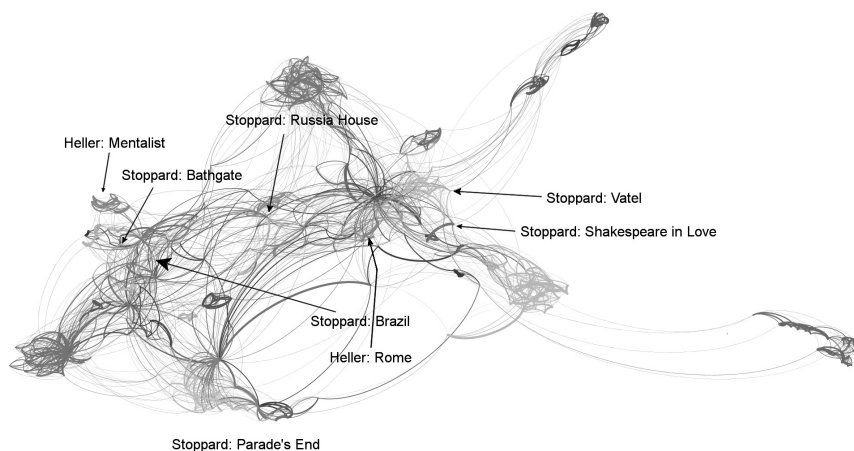


As we found out, the authorial signal often recedes before that of genre. For instance, the Bruno Heller crafting dialogues for the BBC-HBO series *Rome* (2005) is stylometrically "different" from the Bruno Heller writing the CBS series *Mentalist* (2008). Similarly, the Tom Stoppard creating dialogues for *Shakespeare in Love* (1998) reveals markedly different stylometric signals from the Tom Stoppard writing a political thriller *Russia House* (1990). Diagrams for novels rarely show such distances between texts by the same authors. This would suggest that the screenwriters tend to adapt their style to particular film/television genres.

## 3.2  Epoch signals

However, as our research demonstrates, the genre signal might overlap with that of the epoch presented on screen. This is especially visible in the treatment, by scriptwriters, of England's own historic periods and those of other countries. The diagram below shows a cluster analysis of original film and television series dialogues, portraying three epochs: Roman Antiquity [*Ben Hur* (1951; 2010); *Caesar and Cleopatra* (1945); *Cleopatra* (1934; 1963); *The Fall of the Roman Empire* (1964); *Gladiator* (2000); *I Claudius* (1976), *Julius Caesar* (1953; 1979; 2002); *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1935); *The Last Legion* (2007); *Pompeii* (2014); *Quo Vadis* (1951); *The Robe* (1953); *Rome* (2005–7); *Spartacus* (1960; 2010–2013)]; Italian Renaissance [*The Borgias (2011–2013); Borgia* (2011–2014)]; and Tudor England

(as specified in *Table 1*). The consensus tree (*Figure 2*) demonstrates again similarities and differences based on the use of the most frequent words:

*Figure 2.*  *Consensus tree visualising affinities and differences among dialogues in films and television productions portraying particular epochs (Ancient Rome, Renaissance Italy, Tudor England).*
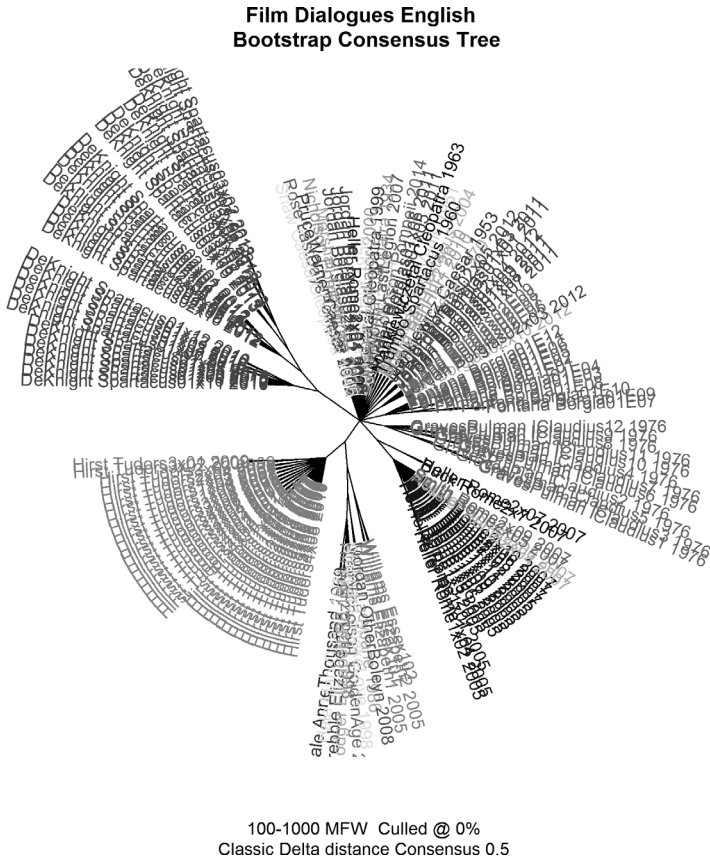


As can be seen in the diagram, there is a distinct similarity between various portrayals of the Tudor era (including the genre division into a TV series and the feature films, regardless of their year of production). *The Tudors* cluster together as a series and the remaining "Elizabethan" productions form their related subbranch. What is noteworthy, the portrayals of other cultures and times (Roman Antiquity, Italian Renaissance) display entirely different stylometric features, with

multi-episode TV-series clustering together and the portrayals of Borgias displaying random affinities with the portrayals of Ancient Rome.

## 3.3  Syntactic variation in dubbing, voice-over and subtitling

The methods based on simple word frequencies, however, are less useful when one attempts to show the differences between various modes of audiovisual translation: subtitles, dubbing and voice-over. When subjected to the cluster analysis of most frequent word frequencies, the Polish translations of Tudor films group only by film and episode, as demonstrated in *Figure 3*.

*Figure 3.  Consensus tree presenting stylistic affinities among alternative Polish language versions of Tudor films and television series, colour-coded according to the AVT mode (voice-over – blue, subtitles – green, fansubs – red).*

However, when the texts are converted to part of speech sequences, some difference may be observed between voice-over and subtitles, both professional and amateur. By comparing the frequencies of sequences of part of speech n-grams (clusters of n-words), we observe that independently created voice-over scripts differ in syntax from the subtitles, as demonstrated in *Figure 4*.

*Figure 4. Consensus tree demonstrating syntactic differences between Polish voiced-over and subtitled dialogues, based on the analysis of part of speech 5-grams.*



**Tudor Era Polish
Bootstrap Consensus Tree**

100-2 MFW 5-grams Culled @ 0-60%
Classic Delta distance Consensus 0.5
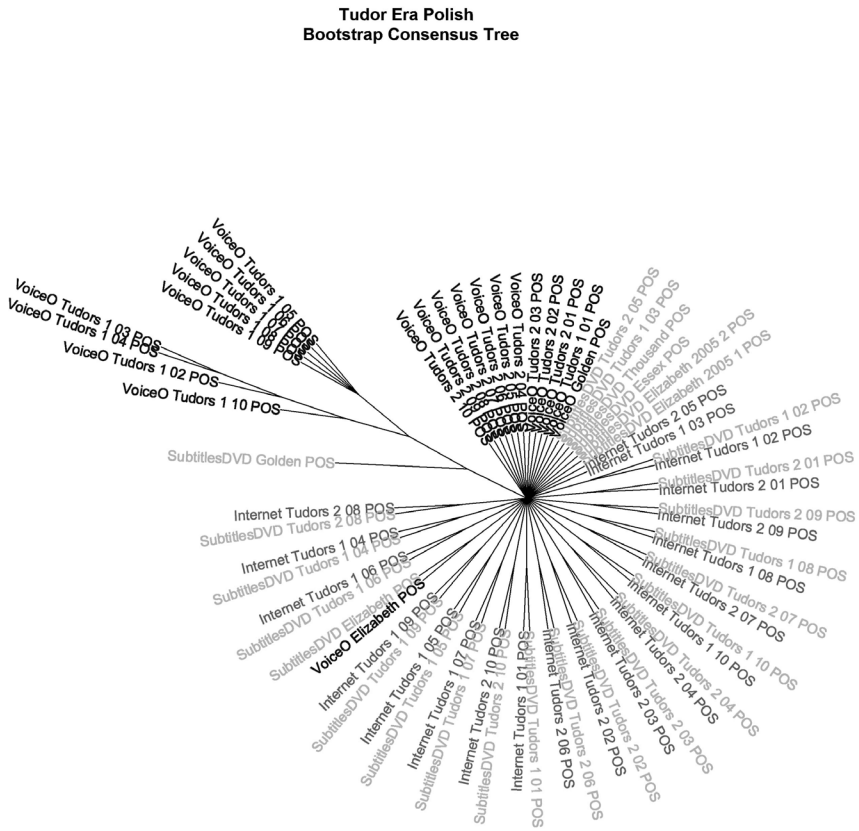
By contrast, Italian translations of the same productions exhibit little difference between subtitles and dubbing, as shown in an analogous part of speech sequence analysis (see *Figure 5*).

*Figure 5.* *Consensus tree demonstrating relative syntactic uniformity of Italian dubbed, subtitled and fansubbed dialogues, based on the analysis of part of speech 5-grams, colour-coded according to the AVT mode (dubbing – red, subtitles – blue, fansubs – green).*
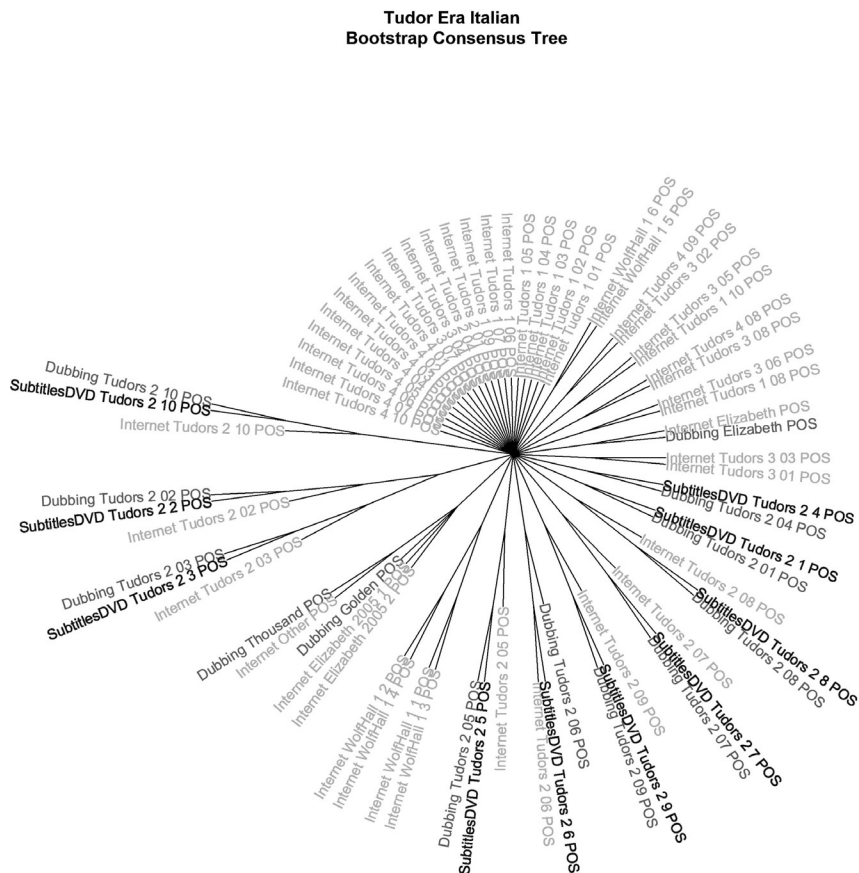
## 3.4  Text length and lexical variation in Italian and Polish dialogues

On the other hand, the analysis of text length distribution in the original pro-
ductions, as well as their voiced-over, subtitled, fansubbed and dubbed versions
allowed us to verify the degree of reduction in alternative AVT modes. We con-
ducted a pilot study on a parallel English, Polish and Italian corpus of dialogues
from the second season of *The Tudors* series. The box plots below (*Figure 6*)
illustrate the most frequent ranges of text lengths (visualised in boxes) and the
maximal and minimal lengths (visualised as outliers). As it turned out, most
original episodes of *The Tudors* range from 3.500 to 4.000 words, while their Polish
counterparts decrease to 3–3.500 words in subtitles and to as few as 2000 words
in voice-over. In Italian, there is little difference between dubbing and subtitles;
however, fansubs are slightly longer and manifest greater variety in text length.

Figure 6.  *Box plots presenting text lengths in words in Polish (left) and Italian (right)*
*audiovisual translation modes.*
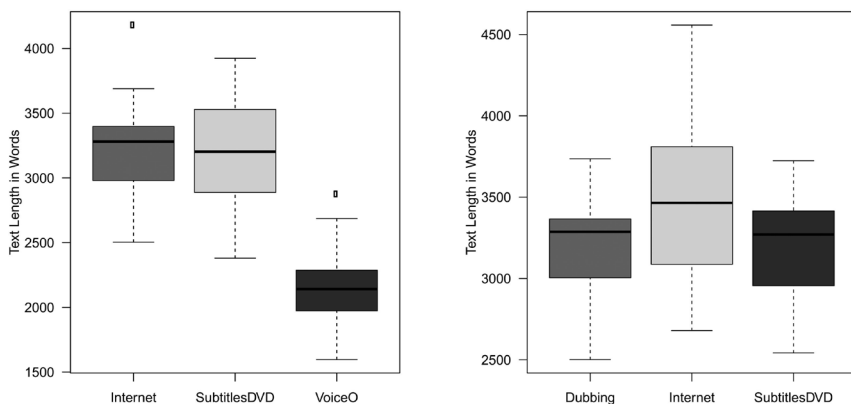


The different modes of translation can also be compared in terms of lexical den-
sity/vocabulary richness. This measure is calculated as the ratio between the num-
ber of different words in the texts (number of types) and the length of each text
in words (number of tokens). To minimise the possible bias due to inflection in
Italian and Polish, word lemmas were counted instead of inflected word forms
(see *Figure 7*).

As far as Italy is concerned, dubbing, subtitles and fansubs demonstrate little
difference in terms of vocabulary richness. They all seem to fit with little variation
within the range 0.38–0.4. In Polish, however, a markedly higher lexical density
has been observed for the voice-over mode: it amounts to 0.47. This indicates that,

despite its relative brevity, voice-over translation uses a more varied language than the "written" translation modes.

*Figure 7.  Lexical density in Polish (left) and Italian (right) audiovisual translation modes.*
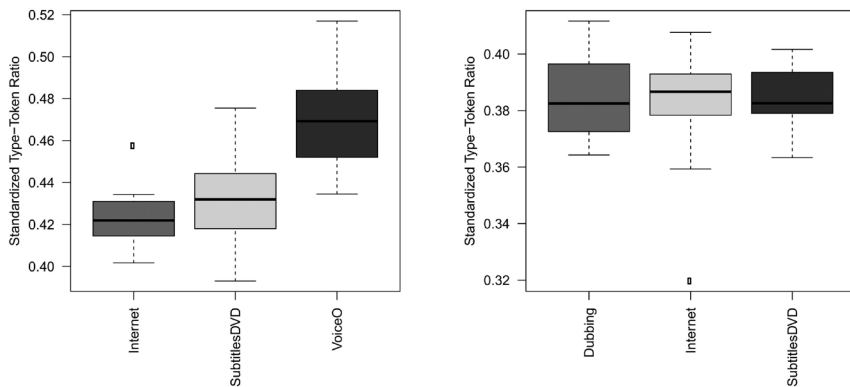


## 4.  Conclusions

On the basis of quantitative analyses presented above, we might venture a few preliminary conclusions, to be further verified by qualitative research. Judging by the weakness of authorial signal in the dialogues analysed, the screenwriters indeed seem to adapt filmic speech to the requirements of the genre and the epoch portrayed. From the point of view of stylometry, this an interesting new development, quite in contrast to what usually happens in the best-studied stylometric material, literary texts, which usually present a very visible signal of the author in his or her individual pattern of most-frequent-word usage. Patterns of communication in Tudor films seem more homogeneous than in productions set in other historical realities, because the screenwriters may draw inspiration from authentic sources, informing the tradition of verbal representation of the epoch in the Anglosphere. By contrast, films set in a historical context less familiar to the Anglophone audience, such as Ancient Rome or Italian Renaissance, are less homogeneous in terms of dialogue stylistics and depend more on the preferences of individual screenwriters.

As concerns audiovisual translators, we made rather unexpected observations. Firstly, we found that Poland and Italy signifiantly differ in their aproaches to the same audiovisual translation modes.

As far as Italy is concerned, we noticed astounding uniformity of style regardless of the technique used, be it subtitles or dubbing. Furthermore we noticed

that the stylistic norms prevail over technical requirements, such as the brevity of subtitles, which tend to equal and sometimes even exceed the length of dubbing.

As far as Poland is concerned, we observed a great variety of styles and strategies, suggesting an absence of generally approved stylistic norms in audiovisual tanslation, regardless of the film distribution formats. Furthermore, statistical analysis confirmed previous intuitions of several scholars that voice-over involves in fact the most radical reduction and transformation of the original text (Franco et al., 2010; Woźniak, 2012; Hołobut, 2015), hence its stylistic idiosyncracy visible in our analysis. The interdisciplinary approach proposed in our paper might be of interest not only to screen translation researchers, but also film historians and digital humanists, since their tools have proved useful in the analysis of a different textual material, so far completely unexplored in stylometric terms. In our opinion, computational analysis is an invaluable prelude to an in-depth qualitative study of the original and translated scripts. It invites further research into:

- the importance of cultural factors in screen translation;
- differences in translation strategies, as applied in different countries within the realm of a particular AVT mode;
- cross-pollination and reusability of the same stylistic solutions in dubbing and subtitles, official and amateur subtitles, voice-over and subtitles in the countries under scrutiny;
- the influence of literary models and historical documents on the translation of historical fiction in different countries.

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# Factors that influence the occurrence of partial subtitling in Malayalam polyglot movies

**Abstract:** This paper examines the practice of partial subtitling in the Malayalam movie industry when languages other than Malayalam are present in a movie. I explore if the presence of other languages is acknowledged at all and if yes, how they are presented in the final product. The genre 'polyglot films' (Wahl (2005) as cited in O'Sullivan (2011:83)) is rather limiting and I argue for the introduction of new terms. In the next part of the paper, I review literature that already exists about the conditions that affect partial subtitling. According to Kozloff (2000: 73), the foreign dialogue is usually "made clear by context, cognates, or pantomime, or by having a bilingual character handily present to provide a translation" or conveyed using "printed subtitles". Díaz-Cintas (2011: 220) points out that the two factors that influence the subtitling of other languages present in a movie are the "expectations of the average viewer" and "the linguistic closeness between languages". He also argues that the subtitles are usually present render dialogues that have narrative relevance. These factors all yield positive results in Malayalam movie contexts and also become the deciding factor as to whether partial subtitles should be present or not. What this paper reports is that one cannot segregate these factors into watertight compartments, and also that there is an internal hierarchy among these factors that finally influence the occurrence of partial subtitles.

## 1. Introduction

Subtitling, over the course of about twenty years has made its way into the domain of scientific enquiry and has been studied from different points of view. Most studies on interlingual subtitling have however been done in European contexts and were done from the perspective of linguistic and cultural changes. The focus of this paper is not to examine the translations as such, but to examine the factors that affect the presence of subtitling in what Chris Wahl (2005: 1) calls 'polyglot films'.

Subtitling can be complete or partial. Complete subtitling can be interlingual or intralingual and can be an addition to the actual sound track of the movie. The functions of such subtitles are different and are aimed at an audience who are in a disadvantageous position in understanding the language spoken in the movie. In other cases, it is used for didactic purposes, i.e., it is used in classroom situations as an aid to language learning. Partial subtitling on the other hand appears mostly in the language primarily spoken in the movie for other languages that

are present in the movie. The aim of this paper is to examine partial subtitling in the context of polyglot movies that have Malayalam as their primary language.

## 2. Subtitling and partial subtitling

Defining subtitling is a difficult task. But, for my working purpose, I define subtitling as follows: subtitles are written texts supplementing or substituting the soundtrack of a video or a live performance that occurs in synchronization with the speech of the characters, or other discursive elements from the source material, and caters to viewers who are in a disadvantageous position in hearing or understanding the language present on-screen, or in the other case, to enhance the clarity of the story line. They can be a text that appears on the screen to show when and/or where the story is set. They are also used for entertainment purposes like karaoke, as an aid in learning the language, increasing reading fluency, etc.

While defining subtitles, I put forth the idea of how subtitles help "viewers who are in a disadvantageous position in hearing or understanding the language present on-screen". Partial subtitles, however, are intended for an audience who can understand the primary language of the movie, but are in a disadvantageous position in understanding other languages that appear in a movie apart from this primary language.

What is to be remembered is that complete and partial subtitling share some features. For instance, partial subtitling takes up the same screen space as that seen in complete subtitling, and the time that the partial subtitles are left on the screen also remains the same when compared to complete subtitling. The British Broadcasting Corporation proposes in *Online Subtitling Editorial Guidelines V1.1* for "bbc.co.uk" that subtitles should not exceed a maximum of two lines, with each line having a maximum of 34 characters. According to their guidelines, if there are two lines of subtitles, it should remain on screen for 8–10 seconds which will provide sufficient reading time for readers of all age groups. They also propose for a gap of 1–1.5 seconds between each subtitle. However, these regulations are proposed for English, and will hold true for both partial and complete subtitles. Malayalam does not have a proposed set of regulations for subtitles. However, in my personal experience, all the movies discussed in this paper provide sufficient reading time for the viewers, and have also not taken more than 2 lines to provide subtitles.

The cases discussed above are of similarities between partial and complete subtitling in the technical aspect, but there are also similarities in the language-related aspects. The main issues occur when there is the presence of a lengthy utterance in a small amount of time. The linguistic and semantic structures of the subtitle will then have to be altered to fit into this time and space frame.

Untranslatability becomes a major concern and translators have to adopt strategies like paraphrasing, specification (subtitling strategies mentioned in Pedersen, 2005) etc. to overcome it. While these are some of the issues that need to be studied while analyzing the subtitles, it falls beyond the scope of this paper, and hence I will not delve into them here.

## 3. Polyglot films and other related categories

Movies with many languages have been referred to in existing literature as 'polyglot films'. Chris Wahl (2005: 2), in his article "Discovering a New Genre: Polyglot Films", states that in polyglot films "languages are used in the way they would be used in reality. They define geographical or political borders, 'visualise' the different social, personal or cultural levels of the characters and enrich their aura in conjunction with the voice. Even though Wahl updates his definition in 2008, it still does not address the case that these movies cannot be referred to as movies belonging to a specific language. However, the common trend is to label them so. These movies have a primary language, a language that gives you a direction as to who the intended audience is. Also, generally the partial subtitles appear in this primary language.[1] So, it is only fair to call such movies with the 'name of the language' as a prefix to 'movies'. And because other languages are present, it becomes important to accept this factor as well. For my research, I would like to call such movies '$L_1$ polyglot movies' where $L_1$ is the primary language of the movie. To decide what the $L_1$ is, I go back to looking at the language of the partial subtitles which gives us an idea about who the intended audience is. In this case, I will concentrate on Malayalam polyglot movies, i.e. movies in which partial subtitles are in Malayalam.

When we create a separate class called Malayalam polyglot movies, we have to discuss the nature of the other movies that come under the label 'Malayalam movies'. They can be monolingual, i.e. when there is no presence of other languages. But there is also this other class of movies where it is presupposed that the intended audience has an understanding of the language(s) spoken (apart from Malayalam) in the movie. This happens especially with Tamil and English dialogues. No subtitles are given most of the time, and it is taken for granted that the audience understand the dialogues. I would like to call them 'pseudomonolingual movies' tentatively.

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1   An exceptional case I found was *Urumi* (Sivan, 2011) where the partial subtitle appears in English in spite of having Malayalam as the $L_1$. *Urumi*was dubbed into Tamil and Telugu languages, and this I am assuming could be one of the reasons why the partial subtitles appeared in English.

## 4. Factors that affect the occurrence of partial subtitling

A number of Malayalam movies make use of other languages like English, other Indian languages, and languages spoken outside India. However, one cannot always find partial subtitles in such situations. A variety of factors influence the presence or absence of partial subtitling in movies. For this, it is necessary to explore the function partial subtitles have in that particular situation. The function in many cases decide as to whether partial subtitles should be present or not. But these functions are mutually inclusive. If it is the function that acts as a deciding factor of the presence of subtitles or if it is with the subtitles that the function gets an identity is a separate question and will not be taken up in this paper. However, for the purpose of my paper, I will segregate them for analytical purposes.

Scholars have identified and discussed the factors that influence the presence of partial subtitling. Díaz-Cintas (2011: 220) explains this case in relation to the 'original' (where the movies have partial subtitling) and in their translations (when partial subtitles are translated as part of complete subtitles). He observes that "whether or not other languages are subtitled in the original and in the translation will also depend on the expectations of the average viewer and on the linguistic closeness between language". In this paper, I will only look at partial subtitles in 'original' Malayalam polyglot movies.

### 4.1 Expectation of the average viewer

There is always an intended primary audience for the movie in terms of its language. Most often, it is taken for granted that this intended audience, here in the context of Malayalam movies understands English and Tamil as well, i.e., in most cases of Malayalam polyglot movies, the expectation is that the audience understands Tamil and English. These languages, when spoken in a movie (advertised as a Malayalam movie) are not given partial subtitles, making the movie pseudomonolingual.

The movies *Commissioner* (1994), *The King* (1995), and *The King and the Commissioner* (2012) are all Malayalam political-police investigation stories. To start with, even the names of the movies are in English and they are transliterated in Malayalam script. The movies use English very prominently in the dialogues. The dialogues are not always lengthy utterances, and there are translations in the form of explanations provided in the dialogues that follow. In other cases, there are no subtitles given at all. The audience is expected to know and understand what is said. Or rather here, the audience is expected to understand this usage of English as a language of power, a medium that is used to convey that the administrators

in the higher order positions are well-educated and hence have a good command of the language.

The movie *Spanish Masala* is a Malayalam polyglot movie directed by Lal Jose in 2012, a large part of which is set in Spain and the remaining part in Kerala. Apart from Malayalam, the two other languages used in the movie are Spanish and English. However, not all dialogues are subtitled. The story revolves around the family of a Spanish ex-diplomat who had spent a part of his career in India. The protagonist Charlie comes as a cook to the household and the story progresses with him falling in love with the ex-diplomat's daughter Camilla. It is important for us to know that Camilla can speak Malayalam, though heavily accented, and can understand Malayalam, as she was raised by a Malayali nanny. As for Charlie, in his introduction scene, he is shown as a child in a classroom where he refuses to learn English as he believes that there is no need for him to learn another language apart from his own mother tongue, Malayalam.

In the movie, English is used a lot of times between the characters to translate the Spanish spoken by the natives, and for these exchanges, the subtitles are not given. For instance, there is a scene in which Camilla's father asks Charlie to sit and play chess with him, first in Spanish, and then in English. Charlie does not understand what is being said to him. But he picks up words like 'play', 'sit' etc from the conversation. Charlie replies to him in broken English with gestures and Malayalam in between. He says "I no sitting…. you sitting", "you chodikkum (will ask) food" etc. with gestures for 'sitting', 'food' etc. He literally translates some of the Malayalam words to English. E.g. He says "no walking" where he means "that is not going to happen". This is because in Malayalam, the verb 'nadakkuka' can mean 'to happen' and also 'to walk'. This is done in a comical way such that it induces laughter in the audience. For me, what is interesting is that even Charlie, the protagonist who is portrayed as somebody who cannot handle a conversation in English, is shown to understand most of the English sentences and phrases directed at him. The expectation of the movie makers here is that the intended audience knows as much English as Charlie knows. So in instances where Charlie speaks English, or when Charlie is trying to understand the English spoken to him by others, there are no subtitles provided. Here again, the presence and absence of partial subtitles depend on the protagonist's understanding of the language. In this particular movie partial subtitles are generally avoided to create humour, and so, if they are present, the humour element gets miscarried in the process. As cited in Díaz-Cintas (2011: 216), Chiaro (2007) documents that "multilingualism can trigger humorous situations in which characters fail to understand each other, with comic consequences".

Díaz-Cintas (2011: 220) observes that the "non-translation can have the benefit of emphasising a comic or alienating effect" citing *Lost in Translation* (2003) as an example. Here, we can see that the absence of partial subtitles contributes to humour.

## 4.2  Linguistic closeness

Partial subtitles are not seen in Malayalam movies that have Tamil dialogues. Malayalam and Tamil both come under the Dravidian family of languages. Robert Caldwell in his book *A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South-Indian Family of Languages* says that he conceives Malayalam as "a very ancient offshoot of Tamil differing from it chiefly at present by its disuse of the personal terminations of the verbs and the larger amount of Sanskrit derivations it has availed of itself…". He even goes on to say that Malayalam can be regarded "rather as a dialect of Tamil, than as a distinct member of the Dravidian family" (Caldwell, 1875: 71).[2]

Owing to the linguistic closeness, many a time, the Tamil dialogues present in a Malayalam movie are not subtitled (e.g. *Pandippada* (Meccartin, 2005), *City of God* (Pellissery, 2011), *Oru Vadakkan Selfie (2015)*).

There are indeed exceptions. In fact, the movie *Neram* (Puthren, 2013) starts with a voiceover that says that since the movie is set in Chennai (Tamil Nadu, India), and because the native language there is Tamil, some characters in the movie speak Tamil. The voiceover further says that the movie will begin now in the hope that the primary audience understands Tamil.

The movie is about an episode in the life of Mathew and Jeena. As Mathew's financial situation is poor, he takes a loan from a local moneylender cum goon Vattiraja. The major part of the movie revolves around the day Mathew is supposed to return the borrowed cash to Vattiraja, which coincides with the day Jeena decides to elope with Mathew. Mathew's brother-in-law also asks to borrow a sum of money the same day. Mathew arranges cash from a friend to take care of all these situations. Unfortunately, this money gets stolen from him by a robber. Jeena, while waiting for Mathew, is robbed of her gold chain by another robber from the same gang who stole Mathew's money. Meanwhile, Manick had also borrowed a sum of money from Vattiraja. The date of return coincided with the day that Mathew had to return his borrowed cash from Vattiraja. While Vattiraja calls Manick to remind him about the cash, Manick meets Jeena and follows her around asking her out for a date, ignoring Vattiraja's calls. Vattiraja witnesses this scene and mistakes her for Manick's girlfriend. As Vattiraja feels Manick is least

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2    There are contrasting views on this argument, but I do not intend to take an issue with the debates saying otherwise in this paper.

interested in returning the borrowed cash, he kidnaps Jeena to demand ransom from Manick. The movie falls into place when Mathew unties these intertwined episodes one by one to get his cash back, find his trapped girlfriend, get her gold chain back, and by mere coincidence, become the reason to cause an accident which results in the death of Vattiraja.

Many a dialogue of the movie happen in Tamil. It is to be remembered at this point that *Neram* (2013) is a bilingual production which was shot in both Malayalam and Tamil simultaneously, and the director Alphonse Puthren himself has done the scripting for both the language versions. Towards the end of the movie, for instance, when the gang of robbers makes a plan in Tamil, they are subtitled. This could be because this event is important for the climax of the movie and a risk of incomprehensibility cannot be afforded. In another instance in the same movie, it was to make sure that the irony of the death of the villain was communicated to the audience that subtitles were used. For this, the deciding factor could have been narrative relevance.

The movie *Thira* (2013), a Malayalam polyglot movie directed by Vineeth Sreenivasan, is the first movie of a trilogy (sequels yet to be released). This movie is about a journey where two people from different walks of life come together under certain circumstances to venture on a quest towards tracing a particular mafia of child trafficking. This movie has 4 languages apart from Malayalam namely Kannada, Tamil, English, and Hindi. Irregular partial subtitling is done in Malayalam for Hindi, English and Kannada. But for Tamil, invariably there are no subtitles. The male and the female lead of the movie are conversant in Malayalam, English, Hindi and Tamil. In one instance, the male lead of the movie Naveen who is in search of his kidnapped sister encounters a girl in a tunnel who gives him crucial information about where she, along with many other girls were put up when they were kidnapped. The conversation happens in Tamil, and there are no subtitles provided. Later, Naveen describes this incident to the female lead Rohini who is in search of the girls kidnapped from her Non-Governmental Organization. There is a dialogue here in Malayalam as an interpretation of a conversation that happened in Tamil in a previous scene. This scene connects details known to both Rohini and Naveen and explains the status of their quest to the audience. This brings us to the next factor that affects partial subtitling.

Another factor influencing the presence of subtitles is whether they carry a narrative function or not. In Malayalam movies, the most common languages used other than Malayalam are English, Tamil, and Hindi. To see whether they adhere to the common pattern of carrying the narrative relevance will be examined further.

## 4.3 Narrative function

As I mentioned in the last section, narrative function becomes a crucial factor in deciding whether partial subtitles should appear or not. In the case of *Neram* (2013), the factor of narrative relevance supersedes the factor of linguistic closeness. This will have to be considered as an exceptional case as there are more number of cases that say otherwise. In many movies like *Pandipada* (2005), *City of God* (2011) etc., Tamil is generously used and no subtitles are given at any point in the movie. Coming to the movie *Thira* (Sreenivasan, 2013) again, Tamil dialogues are invariably left out even when there is crucial information provided in Tamil. In one instance, Naveen talks to a police officer who tells him how bad the plight of the Women's Protection and Anti-Human Trafficking wing of the area is, and how the wing will not be of any help for his case due to lack of funds and other factors. This is the turning point of the movie as the male lead sets out by himself in search of his kidnapped sister which in turn leads him into discovering this mafia chain. In another scene, he talks to a boy in a tea shop about an accident that happened in the morning. This is crucial as this was the kidnapper's van and this is the first clue the male lead collects in order to go in search of the kidnappers. All of these exchanges happen in Tamil, and no subtitles are given. This could be because of the linguistic closeness Tamil has to Malayalam as I have already discussed. But, apart from Tamil dialogues, certain English dialogues are also left unsubtitled. In one instance, Rohini talks to the District Collector about her husband's unusual death after he was arrested. There are words like 'paedophile', 'paedophilia' etc. which gives an introduction to the main theme of the movie and they are left unsubtitled. Even though there are no Malayalam equivalents to these words, a paraphrase is possible. This instance is extremely important because in a flashback sequence in the movie, Rohini talks to her husband Pranab about child trafficking where Pranab had mentioned a young journalist by the name of Amar who had vouched to give more details and evidences related to the case to him. Pranab, in another phone call tells her that Amar never turned up to give him those evidences. Pranab dies in police custody a few days after this incident and Rohini is left in the dark without knowing who Amar is. In the climax of the movie, Rohini gets a phone call from Amar. She goes to meet him and the movie ends with Rohini saying 'Amar?' when she sees him in the coffee shop where he had asked her to meet. The audience is kept under the suspense of who Amar is when the movie ends. Moreover, it hints at the content of the sequel – a possible answer to Pranab's death/murder from the evidences and details which Amar was about to discuss with Rohini.

There are also other instances where English words/phrases/sentences are left unsubtitled. In fact in the movie, there are more number of English dialogues left unsubtitled than the number of dialogues subtitled. This includes words and phrases like 'trafficking', 'cover-up company', 'create a diversion' etc. which contributes to the story line.

To look at Hindi, the unsubtitled Hindi dialogues are mostly casual exchanges or ones those are not exactly crucial to the story line. If not, the meaning of such dialogues are clear from the context. There is an instance where a phrase with a taboo word is also left untranslated. The following incident from the movie will serve as an example for both these conditions: A constable comes to get the police officer who is talking to Naveen, the lead character. The conversation is in Hindi and is about bringing in some criminals that they had arrested two days back. The constable mentions that it is the 'randilok' (the prostitutes) who has been brought, and this part is left untranslated. Also, towards the end of the conversation, the police officer says 'abhi aata hun'(I will come now) and this part, a casual exchange is also left untranslated. As for Kannada, there are only two exchanges happening. One is an instance where the male lead Naveen is asked to repeat certain Kannada words. Here the audience understands the dialogue from the context. The other instance is when at a tea stall, a Kannada speaker asks a boy to talk to Naveen because he is unable to follow Hindi.

The movie *Ivide* (Shyamaprasad, 2015) is set in Atlanta, USA, and tells the story of the lead characters Varun Blake, an orphan boy from Kerala who was adopted by an American couple who is now a cop in the Atlanta Police, and his ex-wife Roshny Mathews, an employee in an IT company called Infotech. In the beginning of the movie, a note appears to the audience in Malayalam which can be translated as "As the entire story happens in USA, unavoidably a major share of dialogues in the movie is in English. A sincere effort is made to ease communication by providing subtitles for important dialogues. Thank you for the co-operation". In the movie, there are only a few places in which subtitles are not given and they are often not relevant to the story. The only place where I thought a subtitle was necessary but was not provided was when a character named Krish Hebbar types the resignation letter. The letter, as shown in Figure 1, appears on the screen and occupies a lot of space. In 14 seconds, a 19 line letter scrolls through the screen allowing the audience to pick up catch-phrases like 'resignation', 'spend the rest of my life with people who I love' etc. Giving the subtitle at this point might have been avoided as subtitling, which will again take up more space on screen might result in making it more difficult for the readers to concentrate on what is going on in the scene.

*Figure 1. A screenshot from* Ivide *(Central Pictures)*
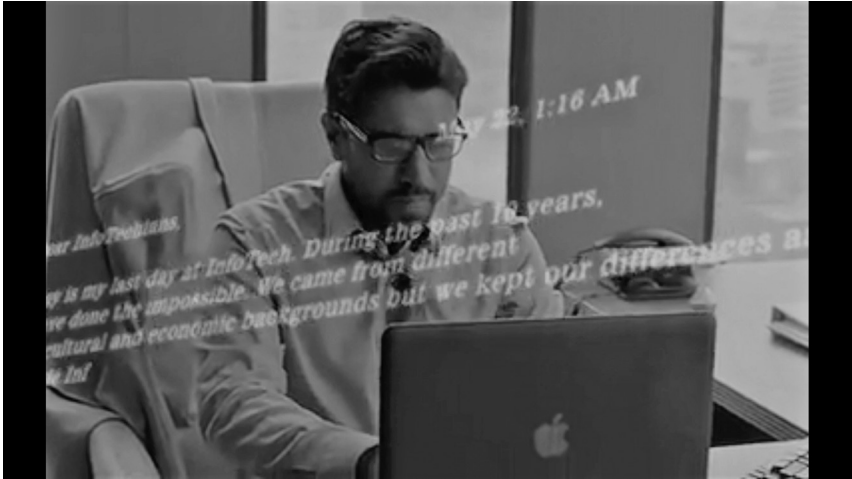


A scene from the same movie (Figure 2) only emphasizes this argument.

*Figure 2. A screenshot from* Ivide *(Central Pictures)*
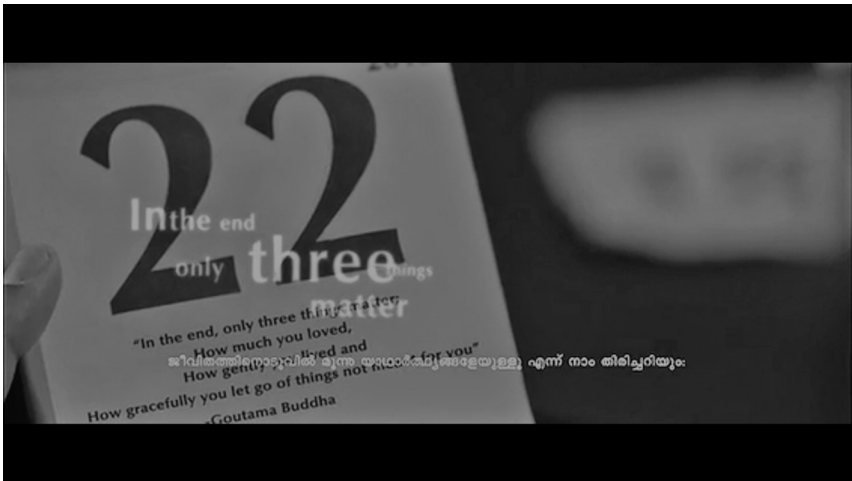


If not for the particular scene (as mentioned in Figure 1), the left-out dialogues only include the conversation about the working of Infotech or a quote by APJ Abdul Kalam or some isolated expressions in English.

In *Spanish Masala* (Jose, 2012), there are a number of unsubtitled Spanish and English dialogues. Casual utterances in Spanish – phrases/ sentences/ questions like "no se preocupe" (don't worry), "¿Qué hace?" (what are you doing?), "¿Qué paso?" (what happened?) etc. are not given any subtitles. This can also be attributed to the fact that it does not have any narrative function.

Díaz-Cintas (2011:220) also talks about this factor in relation to complete translation of a movie to other languages observes that "dialogue exchanges in a second or third language, which are merely part of the setting and have no narrative function, and which the audience will understand because of the context in which they occur, do not tend to be translated".

In Malayalam, even though the trend is to subtitle when there is narrative relevance, it also depends upon the kind of language used. Tamil is avoided the most even when it carries a narrative function and this can be attributed to the linguistic closeness of the language, and to the assumption that the intended audience can understand Tamil. The factor of linguistic closeness is clearly influencing the subtitler more than narrative relevance in reference to Tamil (I am counting *Neram* (2013) as an exception). As in the case of English, even if there is narrative relevance, inconsistent subtitling is done. In the movies I studied, Hindi and Spanish were given subtitles consistently if there was a narrative relevance.

## 4.4  Interpretation

Kozloff (2000: 73) in her book *Overhearing Film Dialogue* finds a pattern in partial subtitling. She notes that "the foreign dialogue is generally minimized, and its import is nearly always made clear by context, cognates, or pantomime, or by having a bilingual character handily present to provide a translation". All of these are reasons that cause the avoidance of subtitling. However, the absence of subtitling can be most directly linked to when there is another character present to interpret the dialogue in the foreign language. That way, a translation is necessary, but the option of subtitling is overridden by 'having a bilingual character handily present to provide a translation'.

In *Spanish Masala* (Jose, 2012), Charlie, the male lead, is shown to know only Malayalam. So once he reaches Spain, there are situations when he is spoken to in Spanish, and is unable to understand. In one instance, when Charlie goes to Camilla's aunt Maria di Alba's room, she asks him why he has brought food to her room, and asks him to pick it up and get out of her room. Like Charlie, the audience also does not understand what has gone wrong. It is only when the helper of the house, Pappan, comes in and explains to him that she does not like food served in her room that he and the audience understand what was going on.

Frederick, Camilla's cousin constantly abuses Charlie, and he and the audience do not understand what is said to him unless another character interprets it.

In the movie *Arabikkatha* (2007), the situation is different. The languages used in the movie other than Malayalam are Arabic, Chinese and English. As the male lead character does not understand Arabic and Chinese, there are other characters present to interpret them. This movie is an excellent example of how a person is taken advantage of if he/she doesn't know the language spoken around him. The movie is about how a staunch communist man, amiably known as 'Cuba Mukundan' from Chemmannur, a village in Kerala is tricked into going to UAE to take care of his late father's debt, by one of his strong competitors Karunan. The major part of the story develops in UAE when Mukundan struggles to balance his ideology and find a decent living there. During this course of time, he meets a Chinese woman called Chu Min who, he is tricked into believing is a communist by Karunan's nephew Sidharthan. Mukundan's world collapses before him when he is made to believe that Chu Min has taken off with the money (which Mukundan won as his share of the chitfund[3]) Sidharthan, upon his consent had handed over to her. The story ends when all these miscommunications are cleared, and Karunan, by now a minister of the Kerala government, is exposed of his false claims, and business deals with corporates, by Mukundan and his friends.

In one instance, when Mukundan is looking for a job, he meets his friend Abbas at a fish market. Abbas arranges a meeting with an Arabic businessman, his regular customer who agrees to give a job for Mukundan. As it was a busy day in his shop, he leaves showing Mukundan the Arabic businessman. Mukundan, during this conversation was accompanied by James, who he met during his job-hunt in UAE. James, who can communicate in Arabic, talks to the Arabic businessman and introduces himself as Abbas's friend. The Arabic businessman asks James to meet him in his firm that very evening as he was going to Malaysia and would not be returning for another month. James deliberately misconstrues the words of the Arabic businessman and tells Mukundan about how he was going to Malaysia for a month, and so the job offer will only be taken care of then. Mukundan later finds out that James was cheating him, and had become a permanent member of the staff in the Arabic businessman's company. However, the audience is aware of James's intentions as subtitles are provided in Malayalam for the conversation between the Arabic businessman and James.

Here the subtitles perform a crucial function. They are not supplementing the narrative, but they are part of the narrative itself and the audience is required to

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3    A kind of savings scheme practiced in India.

understand the subtitles to understand the situation Mukundan is in, along with the actual intentions of other characters. Without the subtitles here, the audience will be at a loss in understanding this, and the consequences of his not understanding the conversations in Arabic and Chinese.

This can be seen as contrasting to what Díaz-Cintas (2011: 220) observes in relation to when utterances are not translated in the 'original' versions, i.e. the movies that come with partial subtitles, or as I would like to call them 'L$_1$ polyglot movies'. He believes that "a translation may have the pernicious effect of supplying viewers with more information than intended and destroying the objective of the original".

## 5. Conclusion

The factors that affect the presence of partial subtitling in Malayalam polyglot movies are: "expectations of the average viewer", "the linguistic closeness between languages", and whether the subtitles have a role in the narrative (Díaz-Cintas, 2011: 220). Simultaneous interpretation by other characters in the movie contributes to the absence of partial subtitling (Kozloff, 2000: 162). However, if an interpreter is absent/not capable/or has untruthful intentions, partial subtitles are found to be provided. This is thus a paper that studies the balance between the presence and absence of partial subtitles in Malayalam polyglot movies.

The factors mentioned are all mutually inclusive. Some of the words and expressions of English language have been incorporated into a Malayalam speaker's everyday vocabulary and those are not given any subtitles. I will not consider such pseudomonolingual movies (movies that have no subtitles for English dialogues) while forming the hierarchy. Now, if we are to form a hierarchy between the factors that influence the presence of partial subtitling, 'linguistic closeness of the languages' takes the topmost priority, i.e. if a movie has only Malayalam and Tamil dialogues, chances are slim to partially subtitle the movie made. However, *Neram* (2013) would be an exception. Here, narrative relevance takes the higher position. So whether the subtitle contributes to the narrative of the movie becomes the next important factor. But then again, it is interlinked with the time and space constraint as I showed on the basis of the movie *Ivide* (2015).

The factor 'expectations of the average viewer' can only be considered in the case of Tamil and English. A Malayalam speaking audience is only expected to know basic Tamil and English apart from Malayalam. So in all other cases, the partial subtitle will appear depending on the narrative relevance. Interpretation, more than a factor is a technique to bypass subtitling. However, in special cases like the one I

showed in *Arabikkatha* (2007), subtitles function as a narrative tool. Hence, we can see that narrative relevance is the key factor in determining the presence of subtitling. Every other factor acts as a supplement to achieving this goal.

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# *Multilingualism in the movies*. Languages in films revisited

**Abstract:** Several years after Lukas Bleichenbacher's *Multilingualism in the Movies* (2008a, 2008b) and Chris Wahl's studies on *Polyglot film* (2003, 2005, 2008), it is worthwhile reviewing the international movie production to highlight the associated chances and pitfalls for the field of AVT. While Bleichenbacher's and Wahl's findings are important as such, they can also be applied to other language settings, including multiple and constructed language variants, and thereby broaden the understanding of multilingualism. At the same time, their significance can be further enhanced by the application of advances in translation theory. This paper discusses selected cases of multilingualism in movie productions and the solutions offered by different modes of AVT. It then draws conclusions for AVT education, including attention to the development of students' media literacy and language awareness.

## 1. Introduction

Information panels such as the following (Fig. 1) are indicative of developments in the international movie production over the past decade. They point straight to the heart of the linguistic, media, economic and cultural interrelationships that govern the production, marketing and reception of movies in a globalized world – including the linguistically diversified travelling of films out of their primary linguistic spheres and the differing modes of reception closely related to this. How, otherwise, could we account for the 'warning' addressed to German speaking consumers, that "the film is multilingual and has some subtitles", a feature obviously less important for Polish viewers.

*Figure 1. Information about the presence of multiple languages and different modes of translation available on DVD (*Inglourious Basterds*, Quentin Tarantino, USA 2009, DVD cases on sale in Germany and Poland[1])*



This, however, would not automatically mean that a Polish speaking audience is better accustomed to and prepared for watching multilingual movies; to me it rather reveals a certain kind of helplessness or arbitrariness concerning the marketing of multilingual movies. Anyway, observations like these can raise strikingly fundamental questions on the field of AVT, some of which might seem to be slightly underestimated and remain secondary against the backdrop of the predominant search for ever-new technical solutions.

At the interface of subtitling, voice-over and dubbing, in the context of global and European film production, between the dominant film language of English and the so-called 'minor' film languages (such as German, Polish, French or Russian), in an era marked by the erosion of traditional audiovisual forms of reception and the appearance of new, increasingly mobile and interactive variants and translational services, it can only benefit the next generation of film translators to compare different translations of one and the same movie, to examine individual cases, and to draw their own conclusions. Not least of all, in addition to gaining more exposure to films and a highly diversified audio-visual culture in general, they also thereby expand their translational and linguistic repertoires. For these

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1    The 'English' audio track advertised on both cases refer to the original version (which is in fact multilingual), the Polish audio track means voice-over, the Czech track refers to a dubbed version. The * on the German DVD case indicates the fact, that English and German are both diegetically present in the movie and therefore subtitled in the other language respectively – a promise not entirely kept (see below).

reasons, the incorporation of different modes of translation including different source and target languages, as well as the in depth discussion of multiple case studies into training programs for audiovisual translators is highly advisable. In this light, the language constellation of English – Polish – German, as it is exploited in AVT courses at the Institute for Applied Linguistics in Poznań (AMU), has proven to be very fruitful: English being the predominant language of movie productions consumed by Polish audience, Polish being the target language of the translation adepts and German playing an important role as a neighbouring language including several countries with a dynamic movie production (some of which are distributed on the Polish movie market) and offering access to different audiovisual reception habits and traditions (e.g. the predominant role of dubbing). On the basis of three recent Academy Award winning productions of German, Polish and American origin[2], with each of the three languages as source language and the other respective two as target languages, it can be made obvious, that this constellation includes seven translational directions[3], which are all readily accessible both technically and linguistically, and which therefore offer fertile ground for examination, discussion, comparison, supplementation, improvement or in some cases entirely new translation. This applies not only to the special challenges of each film (e.g. proper names, specific cultural references, humour, word play, dialects) but also to its para-texts, in particular its differing posters, titles and taglines. In other words, comparative and trans-linguistic approaches open up a wide range of interesting educational opportunities, last but not least in the field of AVT.[4] However, the growing numbers of multilingual films[5] produced over recent years pose a special type of challenge, and it seems to be an additional

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2   Cf. *Das Leben der Anderen* (Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck, Germany 2006, Academy Award 2007, source language: German); *Ida* (Paweł Pawlikowski, Poland/ Denmark/France/UK 2013, Academy Award 2015, source languages: Polish, Latin, French); *The Revenant* (Alejandro G. Iñárritu, USA 2015, Academy Award 2016, source languages: English, Pawnee, French).

3   This includes subtitles (German, Polish; English / German / Polish SDH), dubbing (German) and voice-over (Polish) available with the DVD versions of all three films distributed in Poland and Germany.

4   Filmposters, understood as multimodal compositions combining text, symbol, sign and picture, provide ample opportunities for comparative linguistic analysis and discussion. For quick access to posters on cross-national and cross-lingual level see imdb or MoviePosterDB.

5   Berger & Komori (2010: 8, 4) point to the coexistence of 'plurilingualism' and 'multilingualism', the first referring to "an individual's ability to use several languages", the latter to the "multilingual nature of a given society". Bearing in mind the 'multilingual

predicament, that the understanding of audiovisual multilingualism is obviously under development itself.

## 2. Reviewing Bleichenbacher's and Wahl's approaches to multilingual films

The Swiss linguist Lukas Bleichenbacher and the German film scholar Chris Wahl are among the few writers in German-speaking countries who almost simultaneously have examined the (co)existence of several languages in movies. Bleichenbacher developed a taxonomy for cinematic multilingualism (2008a, 2008b), distinguishing various strategies of replacement and presence of languages in movies based on the work of Czech translation scholar Petr Mareš (2000a, 2000b). At one end of his scale the almost entire elimination of other languages is to be found, at the other their almost full presence, whereby a clear-cut distinction not always seems possible (cf. Fig. 2).

*Figure 2.  Bleichenbacher's taxonomy of multilingualism in cinematic texts based on the works of Petr Mareš (2008b: 181, cf. 2008a: 24).*

Table 1. A taxonomy of multilingualism in fictional texts, based on Mareš (2000a, 2000b, 2003).

|  | Most distant from depicted reality | | | Closest to depicted reality |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strategy | Elimination | Signalization | Evocation | Presence |
| Treatment of other languages | Neither used nor mentioned | Named by the narrator or by characters | Evoked by means of L2 interference phenomena | Used |
| Audience's awareness of other language(s) | Depends on ability to process extralinguistic hints | Through metalinguistic comments | Depends on correct interpretation of interference phenomena | Full |
| Audience's comprehension of content | Full | Full | Full, provided the audience is unwilling to listen to "non-native"[2] | None, unless the other language is somehow translated |

nature of the movie productions' discussed here, I decided to respect the term used by Bleichenbacher.

This has been convincingly combined with different narrative functions the use of multiple languages in a movie may serve (cf. Bleichenbacher 2008a: 26–33). Bleichenbacher distinguishes between three "major functional categories: realism, social criticism, and humor" (2008a: 26), pointing at contrasting and stereotyping[6] (iconization, fractal recursivity, erasure) as the main linguistic (and partly 'linguicist'[7]) strategies adopted in multilingual movies (cf. 2008a: 30–38). Recalled here in greatly reduced form, his findings on the basis of 28 language contact movies produced in Hollywood between 1984 and 2003 prove that all three replacing strategies – elimination, signalization, evocation – are frequently used, whereby they can be distinguished with regard to their obtrusiveness and aptitude to misinterpretation of the cinematic reality (cf. Bleichenbacher 2008a: 219). Furthermore, the choice of languages as well as the actual realisation of a movie character's spoken language are clearly linked to narrative functions, and first of all serve as a means of characterization. Chris Wahl, in turn, focuses on movies fully presenting diverse languages, and highlights their potential closeness to an authentic 'cultural aura': here the "functions of verbal language […] go far beyond the mediation of content" (2008: 339) – "the languages are a symbol for the relationships between the diverse characters" (2008: 347). Cinematic multilingualism, for Wahl, is an element of cinematic realism in so far as it brings the complexity of human communication to the fore and thereby relativizes the unlimited power of not only the camera's eye but also every type of movie translation. Especially noteworthy is the fact that nuanced representation of comprehension often plays a prominent role in these movies, it acquires a 'symbolic, mythical value'. This may be sometimes achieved at the cost of the viewer's distraction from the illusion, as Wahl points out (my translation, cf. 2003: 263[8]), co-opting thus a decided reception-oriented approach: multilingual performance is an essential media-specific (cinematic) issue – and so is their translation.

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6   Wahl describes this as follows: "The foreign dialogue serves primarily as a marker of Otherness" (2008: 336).

7   By 'linguicism' Bleichenbacher refers to strategies of "linguistic racism" (2008: 17f.).

8   Cf. the German original: "[…] Der polyglotte Film ist also insofern ein Element des filmischen Realismus, als er die Komplexität menschlicher Kommunikation in den Vordergrund rückt und damit die unbegrenzte Macht sowohl des Kameraauges als auch des Synchrontons relativiert. Dieser verknüpft Bilder und Sprache mit einer derartigen Eindringlichkeit, die die in vielen Filmen zugunsten einer perfekten erzählerischen Illusion dargestellte, völlig unglaubwürdige kulturelle und sprachliche Verständigung über jegliche Grenzen leicht konsumierbar macht, während im polyglotten Film ein differenzierteres Darstellen von Verständigung, auf Kosten einer leichten Ablenkung der Illusion, möglich wird" (Wahl 2003: 263).

It seems to be worthwhile to establish a closer link between Wahl's and Bleichenbacher's findings, to discuss them against the backdrop of other language-settings and a broadened understanding of multilingualism, as well as to take a closer look on the comprehensibility strategies which would be able to meet the intended functions of cinematic multilingualism (functional approach). That would mean to draw special attention to the depicted situation of language contact (e.g. situations of translating/interpreting, language learning, wordplays, miscommunication, lack of understanding) and to deliberately introduce the use of linguistic varieties, different levels of language competence, historic and constructed languages into the discussion. It would also mean to add the issue of language comprehensibility to more than one of the involved cinematic levels (the plot, the primary target audience, secondary audiences a.m.) and clearly involve the fields of movie distribution and reception (in different modes of AVT). As it is my intention to highlight some of these issues, I will discuss selected multilingual movies against the backdrop of Bleichenbacher's and Wahl's findings showing their relevance as well as their development capacity.[9]

The purest form of production-(and distribution-)related multilingualism, which must be clearly distinguished from diegetic multilingualism and is obviously not rooted in the story told, we can spot in films which tell their story in one language and its characters speak that language although this does not make logical sense from a diegetic standpoint. The setting of the stories is at best made visible (for example through landmarks) or audible (for example through names). A significant example among many is *Hugo* (Martin Scorsese, USA 2011) which focuses on the French film pioneer Georges Méliès (1861–1938). The entire action takes place in Paris in 1930 with throwbacks to the late 19th century, all protagonists being French but speaking English. So, in fact, *Hugo* depicts an endolingual and monolingual communicative situation (cf. Bleichenbacher 2008a: 12).[10] The 'American narration' of *Swing Kids* (Thomas Carter, USA 1993), a story of German teenagers involved in a music- based opposition against enforced conformity in Hamburg in 1939, is not less surprising. Though it cannot pass unnoticed here that Swing is of American origin and the German opposition movement back in the 1930s involved a strong adherence to British and American role models, the choice of English as the

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9    All movies cited in this paper were discussed in depth with Polish students of Applied Linguistics at Poznań University (AMU) in a master class on AVT in 2015/16. Movie data are given in accordance with imdb.

10   The realisation of this 'French' story in English may be somehow justified by the fact, that the movie is based on American writer Brian Selznick's story *The invention of Hugo Cabret* (2011).

language of narration is certainly to be reflected against the background of movie production and marketing. This must raise questions about the reasons for taking up specific plots in a particular time (and addressing specific target audiences), about casting the roles with specific actors or, last not least, about global marketing aspirations – all issues prospective film translators should be aware of.[11] However, movies like *Hugo* or *Swing Kids* replace the language that would be natural for the action and setting (French and German, respectively) with English, and therefore are examples of the replacement strategy of elimination, at the same time offering arguments for other labelling (evocation, cf. Bleichenbacher 2008a: 66). For Bleichenbacher "[e]limination is characterized by the [in my understanding: almost, CBK] complete absence of any linguistic hints as to the nature of the language(s) replaced. Instead, the viewers may be offered relevant extralinguistic information, which enables them to become aware of the replacement" (2008a: 57). This information, however, can include linguistic reference to where the action is taking place, in verbal or written form. To illustrate this, Bleichenbacher (cf. 2008b: 183f.) cites a scene from Miloš Forman's English speaking *Amadeus* (USA/France 1984) in which the formulation "here in Vienna" identifies the place of action, as well as scenes from Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (USA 1993) or Roman Polanski's *The Pianist* (France/Poland/Germany/UK 2002) in which town names appear in the film or are superimposed to keep viewers informed where the action is taking place and what languages are to be expected to be spoken. Thus Bleichenbacher argues with reference to *The Pianist*: "The viewer knows that the setting is Polish, and an educated guess is that the English spoken replaces the Polish language or, possibly, any other languages spoken in Central and Eastern Europe during the period" (2008b: 183). On the other hand, he offers no distinct explanation here why the languages diegetically involved in *The Pianist* are not treated on equal terms: Germans speak German,

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11  The recent German-Polish co-production *Unser letzter Sommer* (PL: *Letnie przesilenie,* UK: *Summer Solstice,* Michał Rogalski, Germany/Poland 2015) can be read as a genuine continuation, plot-wise as well as language-wise. The young German protagonist, in consequence of his adherence to the oppositional Swing movement back home, is found to be transferred for disciplinary reasons to serve in the German Armed Forces (Deutsche Wehrmacht) in occupied Poland of 1943. There he gets entangled in a music based love triangle, which turns out to be fatal in more than one sense. Produced almost 25 years after *Swing Kids,* this movie fully (and very realistically) presents all languages diegetically involved in the plot. It can count as a clear indication of the emerging change in treating multilingualism in movie productions. Although this recent movie's international sales figures remain to be seen, the degree of linguistic realism in a movie in relation to its commercial success is nevertheless an aspect worthwhile further reflection.

Russians speak Russian, but Poles speak – English. This is very likely to be an issue of narrative relevance: information necessary to keep up with the plot is presented in the 'lead language' (English) and other languages serve as a kind of background noise to enrich the setting. The protagonists' understanding of these languages (i.e. German or Russian) itself seems to be of crucial importance for the translation process here. This would mean, that we have to decide to which degree the protagonist's (lack of) understanding foreign utterances would justify their translation (and how it actually should look like).

In addition to geographical references, other languages beyond those actually spoken in the movie can be named. Bleichenbacher follows Mareš in referring to 'signalization' here: "Signalization is defined as the literal naming of a language in the text, and […] the naming of the […] language serves additional narrative purposes" (2008a: 59). Somewhat closer to a film's diegetic reality is the strategy of acoustically evoking other languages. Acoustic evocation generally makes use of phonology and vocabulary, in particular forms of address, names, culturally specific terms, for e.g. food or objects, or foreign-sounding accents that evoke images of the language actually meant. Bleichenbacher puts it as follows: "Evocation is defined as the use of a marked variety of […] (the base language), characterized by interference from the replaced language" (2008a: 59). In many movies these features are artificially inserted, and also unequally distributed among the individual characters. One of their purposes is as elements of characterization. Recent examples are found in Steven Spielberg's *War Horse* (USA/UK 2011), a quasi-anthology film about a horse in WWI, whose series of owners (British, German, French) all speak English. When German or French characters appear, they speak English with an accent typical of their language group. Changes in location and linguistic setting are suggested by means of 'typical' German or French names or single utterances in the other language.[12] Another, rather absurd case is found in the movie *Alone in Berlin* (Vinzent Peres, UK/France/Germany 2016), which is a film version of the German writer Hans Fallada's novel entitled *Jeder stirbt für*

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*sich allein* (1947; first published in English 2009 as *Every man dies Alone* (USA) / *Alone in Berlin* (UK). The German characters played by Emma Thompson and Brendan Gleeson both speak English with a heavy German accent, which critics have roundly condemned and in one case called "absurd sauerkraut sound".[13] It is as unrealistic as any of the strategies of evocation mentioned before.

Multilingualism can be partially present in movies (cf. Bleichenbacher 2008a: 70–82; 2008b: 189–194). There are a large number of examples of this too, including background utterances, short forms as prayers, nursery rhymes or songs, and, last but not least, the linguistic landscapes the plot is set in. Certainly, Polish readers are aware of the complex case of Captain Hans Kloss, a 'bilingual' Polish agent operating undercover in the German Nazi Abwehr. The highly popular television series from the 1960ies (*Stawka większa niż życie,* [*More Than Life at Stake*], TV Poland 1967–69, 18 episodes) as well as the sequel movie produced in 2012 (*Hans Kloss: Stawka większa niż śmierć,* [*Hans Kloss: More Than Death at Stake*], Patryk Vega, Poland 2012) shows the Polish intelligence agent – illogically and inconsequentially – always speaking Polish, irrespective of whether he is among Poles or Germans. German is present in the movie throughout written documents such as announcements, slogans or newspapers, it is visible in 'characteristic' lettering[14], signs, pictures and, last but not least, in uniforms and it is, of course, partly made audible through "short code-switched words" (Bleichenbacher 2008a: 66), such as names, military ranks or interjections. The visible surface of multilingual films is obviously of much importance to maintaining the diegetic filmic illusion. As Wahl points out, "on the visual track, in contrast [to the audio track], the linguistic authenticity is always subject to much care" (2008: 337, 7). Similarly, Bleichenbacher (2008b: 189) notes that "[r]eplacing other languages in writing can be

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13  Cf. thereview in *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (17.02.2016) http://www.sueddeutsche.de/kultur/berlinale-zigarrenrauch-und-sauerkraut-1.2866234-2 (10.09.2016).

14  This refers to the use of Gothic lettering in the movie which is apart from its eminent position in the movie's title on the film poster thoroughly present, but seems somehow to be reserved for issues that are not really meant to be important and understood, such as road signs. This is an interesting case of using lettering as a means of serving the cinematic illusion through iconization (the letters meaning 'German'). Lettering is certainly to be considered as tool of narrative relevance here: information given in Latin characters (and occasionally subtitled) is evidently of more diegetic importance than information given in Gothic, nevertheless Gothic characters seem to be indispensable to signal the presence of 'German' as the language necessary for maintaining the logic of the plot.

considered a very marked strategy because it results in a visual, rather than just aural, falsification of the depicted reality."

Naturally, several replacement strategies can be used within one and the same film, and with seamless transitions. Often they lead to drastic inconsistencies and illogical situations which however tend to be accepted by both producers and viewers, if at all deliberately placed by the first and perceived by the latter. Bleichenbacher comments on their plausibility as follows: "While elimination and signalization are less obtrusive than evocation, they are also more likely to lead to misinterpretations of the depicted reality. Evocation points to the replaced language in a more obvious or even 'honest' manner, but it carries the risk of creating an association of second language use with specific and potentially unfavourable aims of characterization" (2008b: 194).

The past 8 to 10 years appear to show an increase in the full presence of multiple languages in movies. This perhaps indicates a somewhat shifting attitude towards linguistic consistency. Two recent productions will have to suffice to substantiate this: The American movie *The Immigrant* (James Gray, USA 2013), showing the whereabouts of a Polish girl arriving in America in 1921, diegetically fully justified presents passages in English and Polish, whereas the Polish production *Hiszpanka* (literally: *The Spanish Flu*, distribution title: *Influence*; Lukasz Barczyk, Poland 2015) refers to the context of the Greater Poland Uprising in 1918/19 and displays an international spiritual circle, in which Polish, German, English and French are spoken. *The Immigrant* nicely illustrates the economic constraints the actual realization of multilingualism in movies can be subjected to. The main character – played by French actress Marion Cotillard – speaks with her Polish relatives in Polish and otherwise in English, which is, of course, fully justified on the diegetic level. Nevertheless, one might reasonably ask why the character of 'Ewa Cybulska' is not played by a Polish actress, whose foreign accent in English would then be natural, some of the other 'Poles', by the way, being played by Russian actors. One possible answer may be found in Cotillard's career: the movie was released in 2013, after Cotillard had won an Academy Award as best actress in 2008 and subsequently appeared in an increasing number of English-speaking productions. This case illustrates how film producers and directors are constantly required to strike a balance between economic interests and desired cinematic illusions. It also illuminates considerations about which films might (or might not) be expected to enjoy commercial success in which language regions: Even though Cotillard's imitation of Polish has met with some acceptance, in Poland the movie passed by without greater response – again a point prospective AVT translators should be made aware of.

Fully presented and justified multilingualism is used where different language contexts intermingle, i.e. where it makes sense in the story for speakers of different languages to interact or where the plot unfolds in different language contexts or countries. Such plots often feature the following elements[15]:

– Migration (whether voluntary or involuntary), including historical accounts. Recent examples include *Almanya – Willkommen in Deutschland* (UK: *Almanya: Welcome to Germany,* Yasemin Şamdereli, Germany 2011) and the Austrian production *Kuma* (Umut Dag, 2012), both making migrants of Turkish origin a subject of discussion and presenting German and Turkish as equal source languages.
– Personal or professional sojourns abroad, including tourism.
Good examples here would be the travel movie *Tickets* bringing together Scottish soccer fans, Albanian refugees and representatives of the Italian middle class in a train heading from Munich towards Rome (Abbas Kiarostami/Ken Loach/Ermanno Olmi; Italy/UK 2005; Italian, English, German, Albanian, Persian) or the German production *Am Ende kommen Touristen* (UK: *And along come Tourists*; Robert Thalheim, Germany 2007; German, Polish, English), showing a young German performing his civil service in the former concentration camp Auschwitz memorial.
– International, interethnic multilingual relationships and contacts, both personal and professional, especially love stories and family relationships in multiple countries, which often come in the form of culture clash movies. Examples relevant for students with Polish language background include *Hochzeitspolka* (PL: *Weselna Polka*; Lars Jessen/Przemysław Nowakowski, Germany/Poland 2010; German, Polish, English) or *Polnische Ostern* ([*Polish Easter*], Jakob Ziemnicki, D/PL 2011; German, Polish), but, of course, there is a multitude of appropriate examples from other language and contact settings, including extra-terrestrial constellations (SF) or time travelling.
– Conflict situations (both historical and current), including war, colonialism and terrorism. This group of films covers multi-country historical and political constellations such as *Anonyma – Eine Frau in Berlin*, showing the daily struggle of

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15  See Wahl's "five polyglot film subgenres": migration film, fraternisation film, existential film, globalisation film, colonial film (2008: 340–346). Bleichenbacher refers to four "prime narrative reasons which bring the characters into contact […] (1) migration, (2) tourism, (3) cross border crime, terrorism and their prevention, and (4) international conflicts (war, occupation, but also diplomacy)" (2008a: 44). Berger & Komori (2010) focus on polyglot films against the backdrop of "migration and transcultural narration" (title).

German women in Berlin 1945 liberated by the Red Army (UK: *A Woman in Berlin*, Max Färberböck, Germany/Poland 2008; German, Russian, Georgian); *Zwei Leben* (UK: *Two Lives*; Georg Maas, Judith Kaufmann; Germany/Norway 2012; German, Norwegian, English, Russian, Danish), featuring a Stasi informer's multiple identity; the exemplary Polish production *Róża* about the struggle for survival of a Masurian woman finding herself in post-war Poland between Poles, Germans and Russians (UK: *Rose*, Wojciech Smarzowski, Poland 2011; Polish, Russian, German) or *The Railway Man* (Jonathan Teplitzky, Australia/UK/Switzerland 2013; English, Japanese) about a British Army officer held in a Japanese labour camp during WWII.

Plot-wise justified multilingualism is furthermore likely to come up around

– Parallel actions in different locations that are directly or indirectly related. A now classic example is the anthology film *Night on Earth* (Jim Jarmusch, France/UK/Germany/USA/Japan 1991; English, French, Italian, Finnish, German). Other examples include films with globally interlinked action such as *Babel* (Alejandro González Iñárritu, France/USA/Mexico 2006; English, Arabic, Spanish, Japanese, French, Russian, Berber Language, Japanese sign language) or *One Day in Europe* (Hannes Stör, Germany/Spain 2006; English, French, Russian, Hungarian, German, Spanish, Gallegan).

Of special interest are movies showing

– The life in border and multilingual regions, such as the German *Lichter* (UK: *Lights*, Hans-Christian Schmid, Germany 2006; German, Polish, Russian) focussing on the border in the region of Frankfurt (Oder) / Słubice, or the English-Spanish-speaking *Sicario* (Denis Villeneuve, USA 2015) about drug violence at the US Mexican border.

Last but not least there are

– Aspects of economic, political and cultural globalization in the context of e.g. international institutions or global developments that create a need for authentic multilingualism in movies. The Austrian *We feed the world* (Erwin Wagenhofer, 2005; French, German, Portuguese, English) making global food production the subject of discussion can serve as a welcome example – a documentary among many others that make the extension of cinematic multilingualism to non-fictional pictures worth considering.

The languages present in these pictures can be distinguished as native, second or foreign languages, there is the issue of Lingua Franca, and all are spoken on different levels as required by the plot, ranging from CEFR levels A1 to C2.

Furthermore, there often are diverse modalities between the languages and their speakers: incomprehension and limited comprehension, misunderstandings, refusals to understand, code-switching, interpreting between languages and varieties, occasional language learning processes and others.

Quentin Tarantino's *Inglourious Basterds* (USA 2009), one of "*the* multilingual films of recent years" (Bréan/Cornu 2012: 4, emphasis in original), is a treasure trove for questions of this type. It is a fine example of a 'polyglot movie', belonging to the cases featuring cross-national, cross-cultural and cross-lingual conflict situations, in which multiple languages are spoken in parallel and with equal significance albeit grouped around a 'dominant language' (in this case English). It might even be called an outstanding example of the 'existential' polyglot subgenre proposed by Wahl, "because [it is] devoted to the almost philosophical meditations on the (im-)possibility of successful verbal communication" (2008: 342), or, as Bréan/Cornu put it, "for its use of multilingualism as a major narrative device" (2012: 4). In itself maybe a not so typical example of polyglot films, it is superbly suited for exercises and discussions in translation education programs – especially when different translation modes into more than one target language are involved. Tarantino has made several movies in which multilingualism naturally arises out of the plot[16] and multilingualism carries the action over substantial periods in *Inglourious Basterds* as well, being highly self-reflective at the same time. In addition to the plot as such, there is a focus on film as a medium, and on the role and power of speech, speakers, and their interrelationships. The plot involves several countries and languages. English, German, French and Italian are spoken; many characters manoeuvre perfectly in different language constellations and change their languages depending on the action. There are also situations in which speech is interpreted or language knowledge is feigned. Strong accents, dialects, phraseologies, slips of the tongue, and word games also play a role, not to mention reflections on language skills, feeling for language, and questions of translation and interpreting. The action over long sequences lives from the tangle of languages: French people speak English; English and American people speak German and seem to speak Italian; Germans speak English, French and Italian; languages serve to both disguise and expose their speakers; and all the characters want to achieve their aims by means of language. A number of these characters (and their actors) reveal themselves to be supremely skilled in the process.

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16  See for instance *Django Unchained* (USA 2012), where English, German, French and Italian are spoken and an important strand of the plot is based on the active knowledge of German.

## 3.  Tackling multilingual films with AVT adepts

Multilingual movies as this undoubtedly pose a challenge for audiovisual trans-
lation, and have, of course, made their way into the corresponding academic
research and teaching.[17] How do the solutions found by translators depend on
the selected mode of translation (subtitling, dubbing, voice-over)? How should
short code switches be marked in the translation? How can foreign accents and
different levels of language mastery be conveyed? How to handle linguistic errors
and language learning situations appropriately? How can a character's experience
with miscommunication be made plausible to the viewer? To which extent the
AVT process should introduce the position of the super-imposed viewer who
knows more than the movie's protagonist (and could that contradict the direc-
tor's intention)? How to judge the importance of spoken or written information
in different languages if the AVT process requires setting priorities, enforced by
limited space (sub-titling) or time (dubbing)? How is this to be linked with visual
means of expression? What happens with elements of the linguistic landscape
if they remain opaque to viewers? And what if the best possible AVT solution
runs counter to the cinematic conventions and expectances of the audience (the
producer / the film distributor) – all these are authentic questions asked by stu-
dents in AVT courses. Answers can be only found working together, discussing
examples of best (and worst) practice over and over again. Translation appears to
be relatively simple on the lower levels of Bleichenbacher's taxonomy (cf. 2008a:
173–191). However, I would argue, even here we have to consider the cinematic
illusion as well. The illogic English spoken in *Hugo* could be completely replaced
by German in a dubbed version – then we replace one diegetic mismatch by an-
other, whereas the French dubbing would for its part reinforce the plot. Voice-over
and subtitling in turn would add to the insufficiency of the cinematic illusion: the
'French' story would be audible in Polish with an English audio track underneath
and subtitling would mean we have to push the English soundscape somehow to
the back of our mind to follow the Polish subtitles explaining a French story to
us. Matters become even more difficult when more than one language is involved.
The movie *Mała Moskwa* ([*Little Moscow*] Waldemar Krzystek, Poland 2008) – a
Polish-Russian love story set in Poland in the late 1960s, in which both languages
are equally present – seems to show a rather natural solution: the Russian pas-
sages are presented with optional Polish subtitles in the original version, whereas

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17  Cf. Bréan & Cornu (2012) on the June 2012 conference in Montpellier on "The Transla-
tion and Reception of Multilingual Films" with some of the proceedings published in
Şerban & Meylaerts (2014).

a version for English-speaking viewers shows English subtitles for both languages. Most viewers of the original version are supposed clearly to distinguish between the two languages, but viewers of the English subtitled version cannot necessarily be expected so. When the Russian singer is switching from Russian to Polish – a diegetically very important moment as it is the very beginning of the love story – this is echoed in the sudden glancing up of the Polish officer. The English subtitles only somewhat later offer a kind of explanation for all of those who would not have distinguished between Russian and Polish in time (cf. Fig. 3).[18]

*Figure 3. How to miss code-switching in translation (*Mała Moskwa*, 00:14:04–00:14:53, Syrena Films/TiM Film Studio)*



What happens when this movie is to be dubbed into German or French – which to my knowledge has not taken place, perhaps just because of translation problems? Here one gains a broader sense of the enormous role played by language barriers and viewing conventions within European and global film distribution. And, furthermore, here one gains a sense of the close conjunction between linguistic and cinematic means of expression (e.g. shot/reverse shot, framing shot).

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18  And, one may ask, why the song itself is not subtitled – although its content plays a crucial role for the unfolding plot? Cf. the review of Zen-2-Zen (14. July 2014) on imdb: "Someone should do a full blown remake with US production in English and maybe with just a bit of Polish to spice it up, maybe just the song." http://www.imdb.com/user/ur2510180/ (10.09.2016).

Finally, what happens when translations are undertaken within a movie itself and one of the languages involved is the target language? Situations like this are likely to come up around *Inglourious Basterds* as many times has been stated before (e.g. Weidmann 2012). Already a short segment (00:32:28–00:33:03) can demonstrate how dubbing a sequence of English-German translation into German can have a substantial impact on its content.[19] Questioning a captured German soldier about his language competences turns out to be a trigger point: "English?" changes into the German "Schiss [haben]" (i.e.: be yellow) in a more or less acceptable solution based on the dictates of lip synchronicity. The Polish subtitling, by contrast, faces far fewer problems – the two languages are translated equally and literally (cf. Fig. 4).[20] "Dubbed versions are easy prey for criticism, while subtitled are considered loyal to the original film" (Bréan/Cornu 2012: 4) – a universal conviction that is worth proving by "considering a given film's dubbed version for its own qualities and drawbacks" (Bréan/Cornu 2012: 4). Again, this could be a meaningful task for prospective (Polish) AVT translators, who are likely to put the reason for the existence of the dubbed versions in question.

*Figure 4. Translating acts of (English-German) translation into one of the languages involved: changing its content (*Inglourious Basterds*, 00:32:28–00:33:03).*

| Time / Person | Original | English SDH | German Subtitles | German Dubbing | Polish Subtitles | Polish Voice-over |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 00:32:28 AR | Donny, bring that other one over here. Alive! | Donny, bring that other one over here. Alive! | Donny, bring mir den anderen. Lebendig! | Danny, bring mir den Kerl her. Lebendig! | Donny, przyprowadź tu tego drugiego. Żywego! | Donny, przyprowadź drugiego. Żywego! |
| 00:32:32 DD | Get the fuck up! Batter up. You're on deck! Two hits. I hit you, you hit the ground. | Get the fuck up! Batter up. You're on deck! Two hits. I hit you, you hit the ground. | Steh auf! In Schlag-Position! Du bist dran! Zwei Schläge. Ich Kopf, du Boden. | Steh auf, Drecksau! Bring dich in Position, du bist dran! Zwei Schläge: ich Kopf, du Boden. | Wstawaj, twoja kolej do odbicia. Dwa uderzenia. Ja walnę w ciebie, a ty w trawę. | Rusz się. Twoja kolej. Ja walę w ciebie, tu walisz w glebę. |
| 00:32:39 AR | English? | English? | ____ | **Hast du Schiss?** | Angielski? | Angielski? |
| 00:32:40 PB | Nein. | (SPEAKING GERMAN) | ____ | **Ja!** | ____ | ____ |
| 00:32:42 AR | Wicki! Ask him, if he wants to live. | ALDO: Wicki. Ask him if he wants to live. | Wicki. Frag, ob er am Leben bleiben will. | **Wicki! Ich brauch dich zum Händchenhalten!** | Wicki! Spytaj go, czy chce żyć. | Wicki! Zapytaj, czy chce żyć. |

19  Weidmann points at the overall disappearance of cinematic coherence on more than one level consequent to dubbing polyglot dialogues into one of the languages involved (cf. Weidmann 2012).

20  For further comparison, including Czech dubbing and subtitling, cf. Badstübner-Kizik 2015.

| Time / Person | Original | English SDH | German Subtitles | German Dubbing | Polish Subtitles | Polish Voice-over |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 00:32:49 WW | Willst du am Leben bleiben? | (BOTH SPEAKING GERMAN) | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 00:32:50 GB | Ja, Sir! | | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 00:32:51 AR | Tell him to point out on this map the German position. | Tell him to point out on this map the German position. | Er soll uns die deutsche Stellung zeigen. | **Da will sich wohl einer um das Baseballspiel drücken.** | Niech wskaże na mapie pozycję Niemców. | Niech wskaże na mapie niemieckie pozycje! |
| 00:32:52 WW | Dann zeig uns auf der Karte, wo die deutsche Stellung ist. | (SPEAKING GERMAN) --- (BASTERDS LAUGHING) | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 00:32:58 AR | Ask him how many Germans. | Ask him how many Germans. | Frag ihn, wie viele es sind. | **Wir können ihm aber auch die Eier abschneiden.** | Spytaj, ilu ich jest. | Zapytaj, ilu ich jest. |
| 00:32:59 WW | Wieviele Deutsche? | (BOTH SPEAKING GERMAN) | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 00:32:59 PB | Könnten zwölf sein. | | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 00:33:02 WW | Around about twelve. | Around about 12. | Ungefähr zwölf. | **Er will seine Eier behalten.** | Może być 12. | Dwunastu. |
| 00:33:03 AR | What kind of artillery? | What kind of artillery? | Welche Art Waffen? | **Und ich hab mich schon so gefreut.** | Jak są uzbrojeni? | Jakie uzbrojenie? |

Yet another situation occurs when variations of one language meet or artificial (artistic) languages enter the picture ('artlang'). According to the underlying conception of multilingualism here, these too are to be considered as multilingual movies on a diegetic level. Two brief examples might highlight their potential for translation educational purposes: The French production *Bienvenue chez les Ch'tis* (*Welcome to the Sticks*, Danny Boon, France 2008) brings a Parisian and a northern French dialect from the area around Lille together. The Polish subtitles and voice-over work with a mixture of Polish linguistic varieties (especially from Silesia, the Polish Gorals and Greater Poland) and stylisations of voiced and voiceless alveolar consonants (cf. Fig. 5). The German dubbing, in turn, successfully combines 'High German' with a very convincing and humorous fictitious dialect which carries the mixing of consonants very far.

*Figure 5.  Translating linguistic varieties: creating a new variety in the target language
(here: Polish) (Bienvenue chez les Chti's, 00:30:42, 00:30:51, Pathé, Hirsh, Les
Productions du Chicon, TF1 Film Production/Hagi Film)*



The case of Chaplin's Tomanian[21] in *The Great Dictator* (Charles Chaplin, USA
1940) is well known. The original version offers an English voice-over commen-
tary to his fantastic German mocking verbal creation, it is replaced in the dubbed
German version and subtitled in the Polish version. The Polish voice-over version,
which is in this case the more popular one, confronts us with a double voice-
over, in turn, presenting the challenge of discerning between three audio tracks
at (almost) the same time: Tomanian, English and Polish.[22] *John Carter* (Andrew
Stanton, USA 2012) brings together English and an artificial language from Mars,
Barsoomian (also Martian or Tharkian). It appears subtitled (hardcoded) in the
original version itself, so further translations have to add additional subtitles (in
this case as surtitles, cf. Fig. 6).

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21  On imdb this, by the way, is called "Esperanto", a linguistic label rather light-handedly
    given to many movies classified as SF, horror or thriller, and certainly offering interest-
    ing challenges for AVT, cf. http://www.imdb.com/search/title?title_type=feature&lan
    guages=eo&sort=moviemeter,asc&ref_=tt_dt_dt. (10.09.2016).
22  Cf. Hynkel's famous speech: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z4UhJpviVYg&noht
    ml5=False (Original version, including English voice-over), https://www.youtube.com/
    watch?v=bMIIpe-suAs (German version with dubbed voice-over), http://www.cda.pl/
    video/9149392 (00:15:22–00:20:36; superimposed Polish voice-over) (10.09.2016).

*Figure 6.  Translating artificial languages: 'Surtitling' (into German) of hardcoded
          English subtitles (*John Carter*, 00:24:26, Disney/Walt Disney Studios Home
          Entertainment)*



## 4.  Conclusions

Why should prospective film translators in Poland – and elsewhere – study these and comparable segments of movies? Why should specialists in English, German or Romance studies also examine languages and language constellations that may not be a major profile and that play hardly any role in their professional work, as they are first of all expected to translate for their own film markets? As such, they translate most commonly into their own languages, and utilize primarily the established translation conventions in their regions. Yet the answers to this question are somehow obvious: just like translators of books, film translators should never hole up in 'their own' pairs of languages and their domestic translation modes. Looking at other language constellations, at other approaches to AVT and modes of audiovisual reception and at other solutions for persistent problems helps to expand their own horizons. By analysing multilingual movies and comparing the solutions to their problems found in other language regions and translation modes, the next generation of translators can develop outstanding media (film-specific) translation as well as linguistic and trans-linguistic skills and acquire important tools and decisional aids in the process. As such, working with multilingual movies at the interface of different modes of translation should be a major element of translation training. The studies of Wahl and Bleichenbacher present very welcome points of entry into this, suggesting how to supplement and expand underlying concepts of multilingualism and language contact. Moreover, they ask to be enriched by an additional dimension of AVT theories, taking into account different traditions, aspirations and expectations regarding the production, distribution and reception of movies. Granting this a place in the AVT-curriculum, important competences stand a chance to get involved:

- Making use of respectively fostering students' multilingual capacities will enhance students' passive and active multilingualism.
- Collecting and commenting on data from a great variety of movies and their translations, ranging from main-stream to arthouse, are likely to increase students' film-specific competence, i.e. their awareness of how a film 'works', to what conditions its production, distribution, translation and reception are subjected.
- Paying special attention to the language(s) spoken and written in movies as well as the language performances of movie characters (and actors) help them to sharpen their perception for the functioning and interrelation of visual and audio tracks in movies.
- Analysing, comparing and complementing different modes of translations into different target languages will enhance their film-specific, cultural and translational competence.
- Finally, looking for new or better solutions will stimulate their own creativity.

This may render it necessary to touch on:

- A revision of students' understanding of multilingualism, including the position of linguistic varieties and different levels of language competence,
- A substantiated line of argumentation on cinematic multilingualism, through verifying existing taxonomies on the base of constantly new emerging examples. An important issue here should be the clear distinction between non-diegetic and diegetic multilingualism on the levels of narration (plot), production (realisation) and distribution (translation strategies),
- A critical in depth discussion of a wide range of real-world AVT solutions ready to be found on primary, secondary and tertiary film markets and in languages accessible to the group of AVT adepts in question.

My intention has been to draw attention to these needs and to promote further critical reflection.

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# Teaching AVT research at BA level: didactical reflections from a local perspective

**Abstract:** This paper presents didactical reflections on using audiovisual translation as an object of research for students at BA level. The author hereby draws on observations made in the course of a Bachelor's seminar held in the winter term 2015/16. The paper first describes the curricular framework for research training within the translation and interpreting training programme at the University of Graz (Austria). It then explains the didactical setup of the seminar and discusses the students' development throughout the seminar raising the following questions: What ideas did students have about AVT in a pre-research state? Which AVT topics did students consider investigating in the beginning and how did that change? What were the main problems that students encountered in their AVT research projects? The paper concludes with general considerations and an optimistic outlook.

## 1. Introduction

While the didactics of translation have a long and strong tradition within translation studies, the didactics of translation theory and even more so translation research has not received a lot of attention so far. Of course, there is a rising number of textbooks and handbooks on research methodology, but these publications usually address the interested beginning researcher and do not discuss ways to develop research skills from a teacher's perspective. Also, the past decade has seen a steep growth in the number of training programmes for beginning translation scholars focusing on research skills. All of these programmes are designed for post-graduates. Similarly, publications on research training most likely address the PhD level (e.g. Mason, 2009; Pym, 2013; Schäffner, 2013). This paper however sets out to discuss questions related to the didactics of research as they arise on the undergraduate level.

When planning a course that shall guide students through their very first research projects, two objectives are of central importance: one is to choose a suitable topic, the other is to design a course structure, that will as much as possible support the students in their learning process. In this paper I shall give a report on a Bachelor's seminar on AVT that was given by me in winter term 2015/16 at the Institute of Translations Studies of the University of Graz. I shall elaborate on the seminar's course design, highlight aspects of the students' development

throughout the course, and summarize the main problems that surfaced in the students works. Since it is important to understand the position of this seminar within the courses related to translation studies and translation research I shall first start by giving an overview of the situation as it is today.

## 2. Translation studies and translation research training in Graz

Translation and interpreting training in Austria has been institutionalized at university level in the second half of the 1940s. It began as a specialized training programme oriented exclusively toward the practical side of the trade, and for decades to come research on translation had no place in the curriculum and was, generally speaking, of no concern to either teachers or students of translation and interpreting. It was only in the 1980ies that these programmes evolved into fully fledged graduate academic study programmes, entitling their alumni to hold the academic degree *Magister/Magistra philosophiae* and to continue postgraduate academic training pursuing a *doctorate* in the humanities (Leikauf, 1997). The role of translation studies within the curriculum has been growing little by little ever since. As a result of the Bologna processes study programmes were restructured to fit into the scheme of Bachelor and Master programmes. The introduction of the Bachelor programme led to the necessity of BA theses requiring a higher level of academic skills than what was required before. At the Institute of Translation Studies in Graz translation and interpreting training proper starts at MA level, the preceding BA programme is called "Bachelorstudium Transkuturelle Kommunikation" (Bachelor in Transcultural Communication)[1]. As outlined by the current curriculum (KFU, 2011), core competences to be acquired throughout the course of the BA programme comprise among others: oral and written transcultural communication, thereby working with mother tongue and one or two foreign languages; production of multilingual information material for specified target groups taking into account issues of culture, text function and media-related restrictions; basic translation competences; basic knowledge of theories in the fields of transcultural communication and translation studies; basic competence in academic work in translation studies (cf. KFU, 2011, pp. 4–5, 2011, p. 5).

It has always been an issue of debate how best to integrate both vocational and academic education into translation/interpreting curricula (for general considerations cf. e.g. Shuttleworth, 2001). While this discussion cannot be elaborated here,

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1   For more detailed information on curricula structure and content see ITAT = Institut für theoretische und angewandte Translationswissenschaft (2016).

it is important to note, that at the Institute of Translation Studies in Graz courses of theoretical nature are being taught separately of language-specific courses. Although theoretical aspects of translation and interpreting are also being addressed in language-specific translation/interpreting courses, these general courses carry the main workload when it comes to academic (in the sense of research related) education. Table 1 gives a summary of the language-independent courses with academic focus on translation. The column "Semester" indicates the semester in which students are recommended to take the course.

*Table 1.  Academic courses and theses*

|  | courses and theses | semester | contact hours | ECTS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| BA | Introduction to transcultural communication (lecture) | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|  | Linguistic aspects of transcultural communication (lecture) | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|  | Proseminar I | 3 | 2 | 3 |
|  | Proseminar II | 4 | 2 | 3 |
|  | Bachelor's seminar | 6 | 2 | 4 |
|  | Bachelor's thesis | 6 |  | 4 |
| MA | Translation studies (lecture) | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|  | MA Seminar I | 2 | 2 | 4 |
|  | MA Seminar II | 3 | 2 | 4 |
|  | MA thesis |  |  | 20 |

In order to illustrate the position of both BA Seminar and BA thesis within the overall course structure, Table 1 covers not only the Bachelor programme, but also the courses of the MA programme. The BA in Transcultural Communication takes 3 years (180 ECTS), the MA programmes 2 years (120 ECTS). Only the seminar-type courses involve academic writing projects and research work from the students. As can be seen from the table, there is a total of four courses of this type on the students' way to their MA theses. This MA thesis is expected to be a genuine work of research carried out by the student under the guidance of a supervisor. With that in mind it is clear that the students have to master a very steep learning curve. Having passed introductory lectures on transcultural communication and its linguistic aspects, students start off with two introductory seminars: Proseminar I and Proseminar II.

In Proseminar I the goal is that students make the cognitive transition from an every-day-like perception of and reasoning about translation/interpreting to

academic conceptualisations of translation/interpreting phenomena. By means of reading assignments, presentations and group discussions on various types of translation/interpreting activities they get acquainted with different translation and interpreting traditions and focus on actors and their roles in the translation/interpreting process. Thus, in terms of thematic content students should get a general understanding of the social framework and its impact on translation/interpreting and related activities. In terms of research methodology, the students should master the basics of academic writing, i.e. be able to make use of academic literature, conduct independent bibliographical research and employ appropriate referencing and citation rules as well as produce academic prose (KFU, 2016a). Proseminar II serves as an introduction to theoretical concepts and schools of translation, focusing on linguistic, functional, systemic, cognitive and cultural theory approaches (KFU, 2016b). In Proseminar II students should reach an understanding of Translation Studies as a multifaceted field with a very wide range of differing perspectives on the object of research. Thus, they learn about the existence of paradigms in Translation Studies, and about how it is vital for the understanding of a research paper, its concepts and terminology to relate the publication to the right paradigm. It is neither intended nor possible for this course to give a full account of the history of Translation Studies, let alone go into the details of even the most prominent theories and models. Instead, the didactic approach chosen here is to discuss selected publications as examples of particular paradigms' ways of conceptualizing translation/interpreting, of their research interests and their methodological approaches. For their final papers students then have to choose a specific theory or model of translation/interpreting, or selected works of a specific scholar or group of scholars and explore the underlying conceptual frameworks, possible areas of application in translation/interpreting research, and/or related methodological issues. In comparison to Proseminar I requirements for the final paper grow in terms of text length, text organisation, number of cited references, self-reliance in bibliographical research. Table 2 shows the progression of formal requirements for students' papers from Proseminar I to the Bachelor's thesis.

*Table 2. Formal requirements for students' papers*

|  | Minimum text length in words | Minimum number of cited references |
|---|---|---|
| Proseminar I | 3000–3500 | 8 |
| Proseminar II | 3500–4500 | 12 |
| Bachelor's Seminar | 6500–7500 | 15 |
| Bachelor's thesis | 10000–13000 | 20 |

These proseminars are organized in two to four parallel groups per semester. They are very much standardized, so, regardless of individual differences in the personal didactical approaches of the teachers, students go through the same course programme. That changes with the Bachelor's seminar. Starting with the Bachelor's seminar all seminars are devoted to varying topics. These topics are chosen by the teachers and usually connected to their research interests. For example, in the winter semester of 2015/16 the topics were "Translation Streams in Science and Literature", "Translation as an act of multiple comparison", and "Multimedia Translation as an Object of Research". In the course of the Bachelor's Seminar students should enhance their competence to reflect upon and to critically assess different translation theories and approaches, foster their skills to do bibliographical research and to employ appropriate referencing and citation rules, and to plan and carry out a research project and expand the results into a Bachelor's thesis (cf. KFU, 2015). As shown in Table 2, students have to hand in two works of writing, a final paper for the seminar and the Bachelor's thesis. According to the curriculum the Bachelor's thesis has to be written within the framework of a Bachelor's seminar (KFU, 2011, p. 14). However, it is being graded separately from the seminar, and, as shown in Table 1, carries its own weight of ECTS credits (same as the seminar). So, it might be more precise to say that the Bachelor's thesis originates from within a Bachelor's seminar. With the Bachelor's thesis students shall demonstrate their ability to self-reliantly carry out academic work on a specific topic, to critically reflect on the used literature, to strive for conceptual and terminological precision, and linguistic and formal correctness in one's own writing[2] (KFU, 2011, p. 14).

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2   In the curriculum's wording: "In der Bachelorarbeit ist die Fähigkeit zur eigenständigen Bearbeitung eines Themas, zur kritischen Reflexion der relevanten Literatur, zur inhaltlich und terminologisch präzisen sowie sprachlich und formal korrekten Gestaltung nachzuweisen. Das Thema der Bachelorarbeit muss unter Anwendung translationswissenschaftlich orientierter Fragestellungen und translationswissenschaftlicher Methoden abgehandelt werden." KFU (2011, p. 14).

While the final papers in the proseminars can be characterized as exercises in writing reports on the state of research, Bachelor's theses go beyond compilation work. Students are required to carry out a small scale empirical study. The didactical goal here is not so much to produce new knowledge per se, but to experience the workflow of a research project, to understand the importance of research questions, and of the researcher's choices on a paradigmatic and conceptual level, and maybe most important to apply theoretical concepts as analytical tools to a given corpus. Although the final paper of the Bachelor's seminar fulfils a preparatory function for the Bachelor's thesis, the final paper in the seminar is a paper in its own right. Only students who pass will be entitled to expand their seminar paper into a Bachelor's thesis.

## 3.  Seminar setup

The seminar was roughly divided into two blocks of learning activities: the first one being teacher-driven group activities, the second being individual work carried out by the students. The teacher-driven activities dominated the coursework in the first half of a total of 14 weeks. The main goals for this period of time were: to create conceptual common ground in relation to audiovisual translation and AVT research, to clarify the basics of empirical research, to have students choose a research project, and to address methodological issues that might come up independently of specific research questions.

Creating "conceptual common ground" in this context also includes guiding students on their path from individual experiences and conceptualisations of AVT to a researcher's perspective. To that end students answered short online surveys with open questions on moments or factors that made them realize they were watching a synchronized film, on what kind of translation problems they would expect in the context of film translation, on what aspects of film translation could be most likely to become objects of research, and on what aspects of film translation they would like to investigate themselves. A summary of answers given in this survey acted as a starting point for a general discussion on viewer expectations towards film translation, translation problems and translation strategies. The issues raised in the survey were also repeatedly referred to in the course of the following steps: first, a discussion of the movie *Sliding Doors* and its German synchronized version *Sliding Doors – Sie liebt ihn, sie liebt ihn nicht*, and second, a discussion of a survey article on AVT research (Gambier, 2008).

The introduction to doing empirical research was then done in a teacher-centred presentation format and addressed issues like the following: types of research, research questions and hypotheses, models of translation, theoretical frameworks,

concepts and typologies as analytical tools, major steps to be taken in a research project. References for students included chapters from Hug and Poscheschnik (2010), and Williams and Chesterman (2002). Since students at that stage have limited experience in bibliographical research, some time of class work was devoted to enhancing that competence by working with Benjamins' *Translation Studies Bibliography*, *BITRA*, and *LIDOC*, which is the Institute's in-house bibliographical database on translation studies, as well as with the search engines provided by the platforms that provide access to e-journals. That also involved reactivating students' knowledge about different types of publications, and demonstrating how to make use of abstracts, keywords, and descriptors.

The second block of activities (individual work by the students) focused on the students' research projects. In my experience the success or failure of student writing and/or research projects depends to quite some extent on the right time management, but students at that stage are not yet able to estimate the time they need for various steps. Also, background knowledge about translation studies is still limited, so students will have to go through a lot of reading to be able to draft a reasonable outline for their papers/projects. Still, it is important that they develop a thematic focus from as early on as possible in order not to get lost in an ocean of information. Table 3 shows the timeline for these projects.

*Table 3. Timeline for students' research projects*

| Week 5 | Proposal of a topic |
|---|---|
| Starting with week 8 | Student presentations |
| Week 10 | Outline/research plan |
| Week 14 | Seminar paper |
| Week 18 to 20 | Bachelor thesis |

The students' first written "deliverable" was a topic proposal which was due a little more than a month into the course, i.e. when the common ground had already been established, at least to a certain degree. This proposal should identify the audiovisual material that would become the object of study and should comprise a short and basic description of the student's research interest as well as a preliminary bibliography with publications on this topic. Feedback was given especially on scope, feasibility, and conflicting goals.

The second written assignment was a research plan, simultaneously serving as a detailed outline of the seminar paper and the Bachelor's thesis. Here students should clarify research questions, the theoretical background of the study, methods to be used, the corpus of the study and provide a bibliography of relevant

literature on the chosen topic. Again, students received written feedback, this time with focus on the clarity of the research questions, corpus selection, methods, theoretical or methodological inconsistencies, structure, balance of contents, and matching bibliography. Where necessary, students were invited to discuss their projects in personal meetings.

Starting with week 8 into the course students presented their research projects in class. The format was a 20 minute presentation followed by 10 minutes of questions and feedback both from the peer group as well as from myself. The presentation was to reflect the state of the project at the time of the presentation and to provide information on research questions, theoretical background of the study and methods. The presentation also had to include samples of the analysis. Since the presentations were given at different stages of the research projects, their character changed considerably over time, and different kinds of problems had to be and could be addressed in the feedback-sessions. While the first presentations were characterized by a good deal of tentativeness, insecurity and doubts, the last ones would be much more concise with a higher degree of reflection, all depending, of course, on the individual progress of the presenter.

As mentioned above, the Seminar paper had to build the foundation for the Bachelor's thesis. The students were instructed to devote not more than 70% of their texts to the theoretical background of the study and the methods to be applied, to use the rest of the paper for presenting and discussing empirical findings, and to give an outlook on how the analysis will be continued in the Bachelor's thesis. Students received detailed written feedback on their seminar papers as well as suggestions and/or instructions on how to proceed for the Bachelor's thesis. The kind of rewriting necessary to that end depended, of course, on students' individual needs. In most cases the empirical part of the paper had to grow considerably, because it should take up not less than 40% of the final text. In addition to that and following the individual feedback, students might have to restructure their papers, add new chapters or delete chapters, elaborate on individual aspects in the theoretical parts of the paper, clarify conceptual and methodological issues, etc.

## 4. From topics of interest to research questions

From a didactics-of-research-perspective taken in this paper the following issues are of interest: What ideas do students have about AVT in a pre-research state? Which AVT topics do students have a genuine interest in investigating? Does knowledge about actual AVT research influence the students' choice of research topic? Do students go for topics related to a multimodal approach?

As said above, students were asked to answer a group of questions related to their perception of dubbed film as a phenomenon they know from their personal realms as well as on their expectations about AVT research. The students' answers were being collected using the discussion forum on an e-learning platform (moodle). To the ends of this investigation the answers were being analysed: in a bottom-up approach AVT topics were identified, trying to create categories from within the analysed data, rather than applying a given list of descriptors taken from publications on AVT research. In a later stage the same kind of analysis was performed on students' notes, which contained their observations on a dubbed movie, and on the list of research projects that had finally been chosen by the students for their seminar papers and Bachelor's theses. For this step the qualitative data analysis software *MAXQDA* was used as an analytical tool. Table 4 shows the results of this analysis.

*Table 4.  Students' perceptions and interests*

|  | experienced AVT issues in dubbed movies | personal expectations towards dubbing | issues spotted in dubbed sample | translation problems to expect in dubbing | expected interests of TS in dubbing | personal research interests | chosen topics | Σ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **actors' voices** | 20 | 18 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 45 |
| **culture specific items** | 3 | 10 | 20 | 13 | 17 | 8 | 3 | 74 |
| **emotions** | 6 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| **mimics and gestures** | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 16 |
| **humour** | 10 | 16 | 2 | 14 | 15 | 12 | 3 | 72 |
| **(lip) synchronicity** | 13 | 15 | 12 | 11 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 57 |
| **matters of equivalence** | 11 | 16 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 35 |
| **multilingual source texts** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| **names** | 3 | 0 | 8 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 20 |
| **naturalness** | 4 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| **phrases, wordplay** | 2 | 7 | 3 | 15 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 41 |
| **screen and sound** | 1 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| **sense, comprehensibility** | 4 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 15 |
| **SL elements in TL text** | 6 | 0 | 27 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 33 |
| **song texts** | 1 | 0 | 15 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 23 |
| **taboo** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 8 |
| **target group orientation** | 0 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| **title** | 0 | 0 | 18 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 18 |
| **varieties of language** | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 14 |
| **word choice** | 1 | 1 | 17 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 21 |
| **word for word** | 2 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| **written texts** | 1 | 0 | 25 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 30 |
| **out of bounds issues** |  |  |  |  |  | 6 |  | 6 |
| Σ | 92 | 99 | 172 | 85 | 64 | 41 | 17 | 570 |

Looking at the first two columns we see that issues ranking high in the "experience"-column (i.e. anything perceived as some sort of a hint that one was watching a translation) do so as well in the "expectation"-column. So, it seems that the students' experiences are strongly related to their own expectations about what dubbing should achieve for the target language audience. The first rank was taken by issues related to the actors', respectively the speakers', voices, meaning either that the dubbed voice did not seem to fit the actors' physiognomy or alleged character, or that there was a conflict with a previously established actor-dubbed-voice-expectation. However, of greater relevance here is a group of more or less equally represented issues: culture specific items, humour, synchronicity of lips movement and audible text, as well as issues of equivalence. The latter refer to incidents when students felt suspicion of the translation's validity, when they saw evidence that the translation probably did not properly reflect the original, be it in terms of content and/or wording. In most cases the issues mentioned in the answers were (linguistically) referred to as translation flaws. Generally, the students' answers reflected a translation telos of sameness rather than of difference[3].

The second column shows the issues addressed in students' notes on the German dubbed version of *Sliding Doors* which was watched in class (cf. above). Notes were taken in hand on paper; afterwards the notes were being scanned and converted into PDF format to be analysed in MAXQDA. These notes concern the German version only, which was shown to the class before watching the original. It is to be noted that none of the students knew this movie. The list of translation related issues that caught the students' attention is headed by occurrence of source language elements in the target language, i.e. English words showing up in German dialogue. Rank 2 was taken by written texts displayed in the picture, followed by culture specific items, the (bilingual) title of the movie, unusual word choice and song texts of the background music. The numbers in the "notes" column differ significantly from those in the "experience" and "expectations" columns, with few exceptions, namely culture specific items, humour and lip synchronicity. This is not too surprising when taking into account that the reception setting in this case was quite different from a "normal" reception situation. After all, students were asked to pay attention to any potentially translation related phenomenon that would strike their eyes or ears, which is a much more

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3    Readers might be more familiar with the term translation ethics in such a context. In Hebenstreit (2010, pp. 288–291) I argue for a terminological distinction of ethics, morals, values, virtues and telos. See also Chesterman (2009), for ethics of sameness, ethics of difference see Koskinen (2000).

straight forward task than recalling such incidents from previous experience an labelling it in a somewhat distinct way.

Still, the numbers in the first and second columns may indicate a lack of awareness of a wide range of aspects in translation in general (i.e. not only related to AVT). This is not to be understood as criticism. At this stage of their studies students have not yet started their translation or interpreting training. In the first two years of the BA-programme students focus on their working languages (both mother tongues and foreign languages) on developing their competence in language use and knowledge about related cultures. In the third year they attend courses titled "Translatorische Basiskompetenz", where the focus is on text design for target language/target culture audiences. Thus, it seems fair to presume that the numbers in the "notes" column reflect a raised level of awareness and even competence in aspects which students have become used to focus on during their training so far. This thought most obviously applies to the issue "word choice". It may also apply to "culture specific items". While this issue does not hold a prominent rank in the retrospective view (low number in "experience"), it is an issue that has been dealt with already in the course of training, so students are aware of its potential relevance for translation (high number in "expectations"), and are also able to identify instances in the text (media) material, with which they are currently working (even higher number in "notes"). The low number in the "experience" column might, however, also be interpreted as an indicator of the existence of AVT norms in the German AVT culture that favour domesticating translation strategies.

Let us move on to students' estimation of the relevance of individual issues for the practice of AVT and of their likelihood to become an object of research. Again, "culture specific items" and "humour" are ranking top. In most cases numbers for "interest in TS" are lower than for "problems in practice". So students seem to think that translation problems do not automatically constitute objects of research. The following circumstances will most likely be reflected in these numbers: students at that stage will already have heard that translation studies is by no means primarily applied science, research done at the institute in Graz is definitely not of applied nature, and as stated above students' knowledge on research in general and on research methods in particular is very limited. Again, higher numbers seem to correspond to issues that students have been dealing with extensively in their courses so far. The same is probably true for the students' personal research interests. Translation of humour on the other hand appears to be the only issue that stems from the students' realm outside, because humour has most certainly not been a central issue in their courses. The influence of individual learning experiences is also very evident in the

case of issues that are labelled "out of bounds" in the table's bottom row. A handful of students formulated research interests like "status of film translation in different countries, causes and consequences", "cultural functions of film translation", "who decides on which films get translated?", "What do we know about the target audience?". These topics clearly reflect the corresponding translation studies approaches, which these students had been looking into in the preceding Proseminar. Since the objective in this seminar was that the students work with translated audiovisual material these topics could not be taken into further consideration.

The numbers for "chosen topics" show a more even distribution of research topics than the "personal interest" column. So it seems that students successfully widened their perspectives on AVT issues before choosing their research projects. That is of course a statement relating to the whole group, not to its individual members. So, while some students clearly strived at staying as much as possible within the boundaries of what was familiar, others were eager to discover new fields of knowledge. To a certain extent the choice of the AVT material naturally had an influence on the choice of the topic of research. My original proposal, to use the movie *Sliding doors* and its various dubbed or subtitled versions in different languages in as many projects as possible, was taken up only by a small group of students. From a didactic point of view, this approach would have had some advantages: examples of various AVT issues had been discussed in class, which should have facilitated further steps to be taken by the students; it would have been enlightening to see a wide range of research questions being derived from the same corpus; the same material could have been analyzed using differing analytical tools with the possibility to compare results, strengths and weaknesses of those tools; differences in the results for different language combinations might yield insights on translation norms; differences in the performance of individual students would probably be more transparent (also among peers). However, the majority of the students preferred to go for their favourite movies or television series instead of the proposed *Sliding Doors*, which was pretty obviously deemed too boring to spend more time on it.

## 5. Research performance – most common problems

In the following part of my paper I shall summarize the most striking problems that surfaced in the students' works. Some, or probably most of these problems can be seen as being typical for beginning researchers. The question from a didactics of research point of view is to what extent AVT material might amplify them.

One problem that will have a considerable impact on most of the points discussed below is the (still limited) competence of individual students with respect to the involved languages and cultures. The detection of instances of, let

us say, a certain kind of translation problem is as much at stake here, as is the apprehension of the translator's strategy to solve it. While most of the students chose a project that involved a source-language-target-language combination, which they were studying, some did not. As mentioned before, students preferred AV material of their personal liking, which in most cases means mainstream movies or TV shows of US production. While watching such a product in the original English version as a mere consumer might be a common and enjoyable thing to do for these students, dealing with it in an analytical way is a totally different story.

Success and failure in identifying instances of a certain issue in the source language material is of course not only a question of language skills. When students use conceptual typologies which they have found in the literature, they have to learn to apply conceptual definitions to their own material. This often proves more difficult than one might expect, especially when conceptual boundaries are fuzzy or the actual material does not seem to match up with the examples in the text book. In AVT, because of the volatility of the material, this first step in an actual analysis will indeed be a higher hurdle to take for most students. An undesirable consequence for the student lies in the necessity to enlarge the corpus, i.e. to work through more and more material to collect enough samples for the analysis. Such difficulties can go hand in hand with another problem, namely that of a mismatch of material on one hand and the research questions on the other hand. Of course one can only find something that is there in the first place. So, if one decides to do research, let us say, on the translation of wordplay, and chooses a corpus, which is low on wordplays, one won't get very far. Still, if the topic is translation of wordplay and puns and the material is a stand-up comedy TV show, it should not be necessary to search through a whole season or even more to come up with a handful of samples. Although the importance of these decisions has been pointed out in class, it seems that good fraction of the students select both topics and corpus independently, based on personal preferences rather than on knowledge or at least reasonable presumptions about the material.

All of the problems addressed so far most probably had their share in causing the lack of systematicness that was quite evident in a good part of the projects. Instead of looking for all the instances of a kind in a given corpus students tend to concentrate on what hits their eyes, on what appeals to them as interesting, or on the few instances that most obviously match up with all the characteristics enumerated in the definition of a certain category. Again, I suspect that the transient nature of the medium, or rather of the media, maybe even its leaning towards the

spectacular that is inherent in the material, foregrounds such a best-of-samples approach and hinders the development of a systematic procedure.

It was to be expected that a paramount share of problems that students would have to deal with when entering AVT research would be circling around the multimodal nature of AVT. After all, this entails making observations on different channels of communication, relating these observations to each other and to aspects like communicative function, estimating the weight that particular items in different channels have in the given context and so on. However, this was not the case. Not because students performed surprisingly well in such complex tasks, but because most of them simply avoided the issue. In only about a third of the projects students made reference to observations about aspects outside of the actors' dialogue texts. When it comes to doing that in a regular, systematic manner throughout the entire project (not just for a couple selected samples), numbers go down even more. Where multimodality was made an issue, these aspects were mainly connected with the visual channel. In the majority of the projects students focused on the dialogue texts and – to some extent – on the situational contexts, in which these texts had been produced.

I see several factors that paved the way to this evasion of multimodality. As long as nonverbal channels do not contradict the verbal channel or transport that one special bit of information that acts as an interpretative clue in an otherwise ambiguous context, it seems more difficult to appreciate their semantic significance. Second, students were mainly focusing on translation strategies. In most cases the analyses of these strategies yield valid results without taking into account nonverbal channels. Third, there are numerous cases of published research on translation strategies in the field of AVT that do not dwell upon issues of multimodality and will set an example for students to follow. And even if students did look at the nonverbal channels, they might not discover any significant differences. There is a tendency among students to believe that good research has to lead to results, which are in some way surprising, unforeseen, and spectacular. Therefore, solutions to translation problems that do not yield any kind of visible "changes" might be regarded not noteworthy.

Although most students avoided issues of multimodality, almost all of them included screenshots from the scenes into their texts. Whether that can be seen as an effort to include multimodality into the analysis (the screen shot might have the potential to evoke the scene as a whole, at least in the student's own memory), a strategy not to lose the multimedia character of the material under investigation, or simply an effort to pep up once own text, is hard to tell. One explanation might be that students misinterpreted the role of the examples for transcripts of scenes,

which had been discussed in class, thinking they needed to create a certain type of a table including screenshots. Also, many students put quite some effort into the transcription of scenes and the description of their content in terms of story line. Very often these passages went way beyond what would have been necessary and reasonable for the reader of the thesis to follow the discussion in the text. Partly this might have been an easy way to fill pages, however, my impression is that students felt they had to give this information and then got trapped in their own fandom and a lacking ability to abstract from details.

One last issue that came up in most of the final papers was a strong leaning towards prescriptivism and judgemental assessment that should be avoided in translation research. I do not think that working with AVT per se makes individual expectations towards translation and implicit translation norms more visible than working with other forms of translation. Again, there might be some influence coming from examples set by publications in the field. I am convinced that feedback in that matter helps them to raise awareness and to stay alert in their own future writing. After all most students managed to considerably reduce prescriptivism in their Bachelor's theses.

## 6.  Conclusion

The question whether it is feasible to introduce translation students to AVT research at an early stage of their education cannot be answered here in general terms. Academic translation training and even more so translation research training are being organized in way too many different ways to do that. However, the experience from the course reported on here indicates that AVT can be used to introduce students at beginners-to-intermediate level to empirical research. Most of the difficulties that students had to cope with are common problems to student research at that stage. An exception here is the question of multimodality that probably demands a higher level of perceptive capacities on the students' side and maybe more guidance on the teacher's side. In terms of guidance, special attention needs to be paid to the students' choices on corpus and research questions as well as to an efficient format of transcripts, which will meet the needs of the research project. The necessity to produce transcripts can be seen as a disadvantage from the student workload perspective. From a didactics of research perspective, the production of transcripts can be a valuable learning experience. Despite the problems addressed above, students showed promising progress over the course, which shall be continued in the future. The most obvious benefit of using AVT in research training is the high level of interest that it receives from the students who appreciate to be dealing with something they know well from

their own experience. It seems worthwhile to build on that interest and nourish it to let some more students realize that research can be an exciting endeavour.

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# Gaining more benefits from a film lesson: integrated subtitles

**Abstract:** It seems that currently traditional teaching methods or techniques may not be sufficient, especially in terms of their level of attractiveness for students who are surrounded by multimodality delivered mainly in a digital format. Using various modes of AVT can therefore prove very useful in EFL classes: students may practise the traditional four skills, being at the same time exposed to attractive and up-to-date material. This article presents the educational potential of using short video clips with Integrated Subtitles that combine certain features of bimodal subtitles and SDH. To this end, the article describes a pilot study that was based on a comparison between traditional paper-based and AVT-based techniques of presenting a topic and aimed at testing the relationship between the presentation techniques and the degree of retention of the new material. The obtained results helped to support the thesis about the positive effects of using audiovisual material in teaching foreign languages.

## 1. Using videos in EFL

Different types of visual material have been introduced in EFL classes for decades, making the learning process more varied, flexible and attractive. Teachers have had a wide choice ranging from plain authentic photos or illustrations to multimodal moving images. The latter include instructional videos prepared to meet EFL purposes (i.e. meant for teachers and students of English as a foreign language), as well as authentic videos (i.e. meant for native speakers) such as TV series, documentaries, short clips or feature films.[1]

It seems a common fact that, currently, teaching foreign languages has become more challenging than ever before. Living in a strongly media-oriented and visually-dominated environment, students appear to seek out more motivating and effective methods of learning. Younger generations are most often accustomed

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1   The word *video* is generally defined as a recording of moving images and sound, therefore has a more global meaning than the word *film* which is understood as a series of moving images that is shown on television or in cinemas. The findings as well as the research quoted in the section refer to videos in general, however, since the main focus of the article is put on films, both words are used throughout the article interchangeably, depending on the context.

to multimodal messages due to their everyday experience of computers, video games, the Internet or smartphone applications, since they spend their formative years surrounded by the new technology.

According to Prensky, these generations of the so-called digital natives "think and process information fundamentally differently from their predecessors" (Prensky 2001: 1; cf. Palfrey & Gasser 2008). They tend to analyse texts in a more space-oriented manner with a number of directions and saccades rather than in a traditional linear mode (Palfrey & Gasser 2008). What is more, digital natives are more prone to memorise the content when it is accompanied by visual, audio or interactive components.

The fact that nowadays teachers (who are often representatives of the so-called "digital immigrants"; Prensky 2001) meet students who have grown up in a completely new technological environment forces them to revisit traditional teaching methods: it seems crucial to acknowledge the fact that in the case of digital natives teaching should include an interactive, multimodal or audiovisual component, which will help them to integrate a number of skills, and as a result make the learning process more efficient. Thus, videos seem a perfect solution, also owing to their advantage of developing the so-called visual literacy, which may be defined as a group of vision-competencies which seem crucial in the process of human learning, since they enable a person to understand and interpret visual components of the surroundings (International Visual Literacy Association 2012).

What is more, using videos in the EFL classroom seems strongly justified also from the point of view of Communicative Language Teaching, an approach which developed in the 1970s and early 1980s and which strongly underlines the significance of interaction and communicative competence. The key point is not the system, but rather the idea of what communicative functions various language structures have in real situations (Littlewood 1981). Communicative teaching should therefore include authentic or authentic-based material, which has an obvious advantage of providing the student with real-life contexts and thus presenting the language as a tool of communication rather than a system of rules (e.g. Richards & Rodgers 1992; Dakowska 2005).

Films provide exposure to communication patterns which may be found in an authentic setting, and as a result help to develop language competence (Lonergan 1984). In addition, dialogues in films offer the possibility of understanding other vital aspects of communication, including appropriateness, pragmatics as well as social or cultural intricacies which would not be found in textbooks. This, in turn, can help to develop other intercultural or interpersonal competencies (e.g. Kerridge 1982; Tomalin 1992; Herron *et al*. 1995).

Not only do films present the foreign language in a natural context, but they also underline the importance of other non-verbal elements of communication, including pauses, hesitations, false starts, exclamations, gestures or facial expressions, which very often cater for any lack of comprehension. Consequently, students may feel more secure, since they have more resources which they can exploit while deciphering the meaning of a given phrase or communicative occurrence (cf. the Input Hypothesis by Krashen 1985).

Introducing films in the classroom has another undeniable advantage of making the teaching process more attractive, since a well-chosen film will usually catch students' attention to a greater extent than a plain text. In turn, since the lesson is more attractive, the learning process may become more efficient, for students are usually more motivated to work with authentic and interesting material. It has to be underlined, however, that the choice of authentic videos has to be made cautiously, since as pointed out by Broady (1997) productions for native speakers have the primary aim of entertaining, informing or persuading, and hence not every recording or clip can be suitable, so the choice of video material seems a vital point not only in terms of matching students' language proficiency level (cf. Arcario 1992).

Another aspect is the multimodality of the film which helps to address various learning styles, because it engages both hemispheres of the brain by means of the four communication channels and guarantees better retention, which seems to be in line with the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (Mayer 2003) or the Dual Coding Theory (Paivio 1991). It may follow that the richer context in which the relevant content is presented may cater for better retention, since students may build certain associations based on non-verbal clues. It is also believed that using films in the EFL classroom can help to activate prior knowledge and, thus, integrate all four language skills (Herron & Hanley 1992).

Watching a film is certainly an enjoyable and entertaining task, however in the classroom it is the educational value that counts, which is obvious to the teacher and may be less clear to students who are often engaged in a process of unconscious learning. By choosing a film wisely the teacher can bring students and their interests to the forefront and hence make the whole process of teaching more student-oriented and less structured, which again increases the attractiveness of the lesson.

It is also believed that films can help to develop and integrate language skills: there is quite extensive research especially into the question of improving listening comprehension and oral skills, particularly in connection with pronunciation and fluency (e.g. Allan 1985; Herron & Hanley 1992; Weyers 1999). It has been underlined that using films makes the learning process more efficient, because it

activates all four language skills, it is more motivating and the level of compre-
hensibility is far greater, since the presence of other non-verbal elements helps
to reduce ambiguities (Herron *et al.* 1995). There have been studies on video use
in the classroom also in relation to developing writing skills (Hanley *et al.* 1995),
as well as vocabulary, particularly as regards idiomatic and slang expressions.

## 2. Subtitles and language learning

Films appear to have an even greater educational value when used with sub-
titles: as noted by Vanderplank, "subtitles might have a potential value in helping
the learning acquisition process by providing learners with the key to massive
quantities of authentic and comprehensible language input" (1988: 272–273). The
interrelation between subtitles and both formal and informal language learning
has been studied for four decades since the 1980s. Recently, it seems that the
subject has gained momentum thanks to EU-funded projects led by distinguished
scholars, including the project Learning via Subtitling (LeViS 2006–2008), Sub-
titles and Language Learning (2009–2012; for more details see Gambier 2015) or
the ongoing ClipFlair project, which draws on the success of LeViS, offering not
only subtitling but also revoicing tools and activities (Sokoli 2015). Another good
example of the prominence of the subject may be the international conference
"Subtitles and Language Learning" held in Pavia in 2012.

Traditionally, there are three types of subtitles used in the formal teaching/
learning context, depending on the language combination. Students may be ex-
posed to standard subtitles, which offer translation into their mother tongue.
This combination seems appropriate for younger or less advanced students and
is recommended for leisure viewing. Another option is using reversed subtitles,
which means the film is delivered in the native language and subtitles are in the
foreign language. It is believed that reversed subtitles are especially successful in
the case of developing second language skills in general (Lambert *et al.* 1981),
however require a high level of motivation from learners (Vanderplank 2015).
Finally, films may be used with the so-called bimodal subtitles, which practically
means intralingual subtitles, therefore some scholars refer to this type of subtitles
as captions (e.g. Danan 2004; O'Connell 2011; Danan 2015). In other words, the
film and subtitles are delivered in the foreign language, hence the name suggesting
using two modes of communication, i.e. the written and aural one.

All three types of subtitles have been studied in connection with a number
of aspects. Standard subtitles are believed to help to motivate students, encour-
age vocabulary retention (d'Ydewalle & Pavakanum 1992) or develop receptive
skills, especially listening comprehension (Danan 2004). What is more, even the

argument of automatic reading of subtitles or the distraction coming from the presence of the native language may be easily countered with the evidence coming from the so-called subtitling countries, where citizens are believed to have a much better command of foreign languages also due to their exposure to subtitled programmes or films (Talaván 2010). Learning in this context may be more incidental and may lack the seemingly negative aspects such as extra effort or anxiety typical of formal learning.

Reversed subtitles have been regarded as a valuable aid particularly in the context of teaching vocabulary: it is believed that students watching films or other videos with reversed subtitles may easily find associations between an unknown lexical item and its foreign language equivalent, which again happens rather incidentally. Moreover, it seems that both reversed and bimodal subtitles have slightly more potential in terms of learning a foreign language, which was argued by, for instance, Lambert *et al.* (1981), Price (1983) or Danan (1992). This seems true with more advanced students.

Bimodal subtitles have been studied extensively in relation to specific language skills, motivation or vocabulary recognition and learning (for more details see, e.g. Talaván 2010). It is believed that the intralingual version of subtitles is especially beneficial in the case of vocabulary retention and recognition, as well as communicative competence with respect to oral and written production (e.g. Vanderplank 1988; Neuman & Koskinen 1992). Further, Danan (2004) emphasised their potential in terms of developing and improving receptive skills, and more specifically listening comprehension. However, she pointed out certain limitations of bimodal subtitles: it seems crucial to carefully match the language proficiency level of students and the linguistic difficulty of the presented material. As she put it, "even with captions, massive exposure to authentic audiovisual material which has not been carefully enough selected or made accessible to no-native viewers can be a very inefficient pedagogical approach" (Danan 2004: 71). Therefore, bimodal subtitles are theoretically favoured with intermediate and advanced students.

What is more, recently there have been attempts to recognise anew the role of translation in EFL classes, which is also visible in the way teachers can use subtitles. There has been quite considerable research into the potential of creating both intralingual and interlingual subtitles for short clips in the classroom (e.g. Talaván Zanón 2006; Talaván 2010; Burczyńska 2015), which is believed to be helpful as far as grammar structures, vocabulary acquisition, spelling or writing skills (including condensing, paraphrasing or simplifying skills) are concerned.

It seems undeniable that, nowadays, subtitles and films are great learning aids, since they offer a number of possibilities in terms of practical exercises, themes, teaching objectives or language combinations. In addition to that available software can give teachers even greater opportunities to customise the projected text and, by doing so, direct more focus towards specific aspects of practice.

## 3.  Integrated subtitles: proposal and methodology

Integrated Subtitles that are described here can be seen as a means to improve the language learning process. They integrate certain features of bimodal subtitles and subtitles for the D/deaf and Hard-of-Hearing, hence the suggested name. Consequently, integrated subtitles will be intralingual and verbatim, however, they will lack words or expressions that have a paralinguistic character, including interjections or hesitations. They will also lack single or longer repetitions.

It seems that verbatim subtitles without certain paralinguistic information are more beneficial for students, since it may be assumed that their speed of reading texts on screen tends to be above the average (of course with more advanced groups), because they are used to reading subtitles and do it at a glance. A rather limited level of textual condensation seems justified also from another point of view: students frequently tend to spot the quantitative difference between the spoken and written text, which often causes confusion or misunderstanding, especially if they have not been introduced to the idea of audiovisual translation. Unless spotting the difference is supposed to be a lesson objective (aimed at developing the listening comprehension skill, for example), this tendency may district attention from the relevant aspect of a subtitled film.

Other features typical of subtitling for the D/deaf and Hard-of-Hearing may include displacement or colourful fonts for increased comprehension but also certain information delivered in brackets, which may be helpful in the case of demonstrating specified features of language, e.g. highlighting patterns of pronunciation or distinguishing language varieties, pinpointing incorrect language use, or teaching specific items of vocabulary. The choice of the features and the final shape of subtitles will depend on what the teacher wants to achieve with students.

Apart from the obvious advantages of subtitles used in teaching foreign languages mentioned in the previous section, Integrated Subtitles may be positive in terms of adding extra educational value to a film lesson, due to the fact that the process of unconscious learning may be directed towards particular aspects. It follows, then, that the teacher can benefit from everything that a film lesson can offer and still can have complete control over the learning process, drawing students' attention to the desired and relevant aspects of communication.

It seems crucial because even though the advantages of using films in EFL are undeniable, there might be some controversy over the idea of using films, either with or without subtitles, in teaching foreign languages (cf. Danan 2004; O'Connell 2011). The arguments against may be very different, e.g. it may be controversial due to certain objective difficulties, such as copyright issues or technical problems resulting from the time constraint or available equipment. Preparing a film lesson may be time-consuming and challenging for a teacher, who also has to think about choosing the right film suitable for the group. More importantly though, there may appear the problem of passive watching, and subsequently, questions about the actual educational value of watching films or other videos in the classroom (which may come from students and parents as well as the teacher).

Integrated Subtitles can prove helpful especially for teachers who for similar reasons are not willing to use subtitled films in the classroom. The potential danger of passive watching or students concentrating on irrelevant elements of the film may be minimised thanks to well-prepared subtitles and tasks tailored to specific needs. Subtitled material will in this case function as a presentation background, offering a number of attractive stimuli that traditional lessons lack. It may be exemplified with the following pilot study which was devised in order to highlight the educational advantage of Integrated Subtitles over traditional paper-based instructions.

## 3.1  The objective of the lesson

The methodological approach favoured in the study was Communicative Language Teaching, since it puts extra emphasis on authenticity and communication. The educational aim of the lesson was developing writing skills as well as introducing and practising new vocabulary. There was also a secondary communication aim that emphasised the importance of other non-verbal elements and the context in a conversation.

The lesson was meant to be a follow-up to introducing strategies for writing a good narrative, therefore the idea was to work towards rich and extensive vocabulary that is usually used when creating dialogues. In general, the main objective was to draw students' attention to the idea of paralinguistics and how such features as moods, feelings, emotions, pauses, etc., can be rendered in writing. The choice of the words was made subjectively and encompassed twenty-five verbs used to describe the human voice and sounds, including words such as *to yell*, *to whisper*, *to burp*, *to bellow*, *to hum*, etc.

## 3.2 The participants

The pilot study involved two groups of students: the subtitle and the no-subtitle group. The former was meant to be the experimental group exposed to presentation techniques based on using short clips with Integrated Subtitles, whereas the other group was the control group that was given a more traditional lesson with paper-based instructions. The students in the subtitle group were offered some theoretical background as regards audiovisual translation and subtitling in particular, which was believed to be a crucial aspect of the study, since they had not been exposed to subtitles in a formal learning/teaching context before on a regular basis and so the idea was to emphasise the educational role of subtitles and suggest effective viewing strategies (cf. Danan 2004).

Both groups included high-school students aged between seventeen and eighteen. English was taught in those groups as the first foreign language (the other one was either French or German), which means that according to the formal regulations of the educational system in Poland, they had been studying English at least since their primary school, i.e. for approximately ten years. Their command of English was very good and according to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Language: Learning, Teaching and Assessment* (Council of Europe 2001) their level of language proficiency was B2 (upper-intermediate). They were taking a general English course at the B2+ level, using the same course book. In both groups there were ten students, females only, since the participants attended a single-sex school.

## 3.3 The video clips with integrated subtitles

As for the audiovisual material used with the experimental group, those were short video clips lasting up to one minute taken from a variety of films, including popular animated films as well as feature films. The choice of the films was rather subjective, however most of the selected titles were known to students, since they had been introduced earlier on in other reading or listening comprehension tasks included in the course module.

The clips represented complete scenes and were self-contained in terms of communication. The selection of particular scenes depended on the practice that was considered necessary by the teacher and followed the lesson objective. Consequently, the scenes involved above all short dialogues between the main characters as well as short pieces with the characters producing particular sounds, e.g. humming or sobbing.

The short clips were used either with bimodal subtitles or with Integrated Subtitles, which in this case had commentaries in brackets containing the relevant

verb representing the sound or the voice quality visible on the screen. The verbs were provided in white capital letters. No other features of SDH were added at this stage. The Integrated Subtitles were prepared beforehand with the help of the freeware Subtitle Workshop (http://subworkshop.sourceforge.net). The video clips were meant to be played once at regular intervals.

## 3.4  The structure of the lesson

The lessons were given to both groups by two teachers who had been working with the groups for almost two years. The teachers were provided with a detailed lesson plan and the necessary learning aids. Both groups were given handouts that were prepared beforehand and contained practical exercises.

The lessons started with a lead-in activity that was the same for both groups. It consisted in presenting a short sample dialogue between two young people. The dialogue was supposed to be taken from a student's narrative and lexically, was limited to using only the most frequently used verbs, including *to say*, *to reply* or *to tell*. As a result, it was rather monotonous and repetitive. The students were to discuss the dialogue in terms of its attractiveness for the reader and subsequently were asked what could be done in order to improve the piece of writing.

Next, the teachers introduced the idea of paralinguistics and paralanguage, underlining the power of non-verbal elements of communication, such as the tone of voice or other sounds that people make. The teachers made a reference to the dialogue and to popular books known to students to give them hints to answer the question concerning the sample dialogue.

Another stage of the lesson was aimed at presenting the new items of vocabulary and was different in both groups. The control group was offered a traditional lesson with paper-based instructions (though there were some visual elements picturing people making some of the sounds, e.g. a picture of a woman whispering into another woman's ear). They were presented with a list of the verbs and a group task which required them to match the words with their definitions. At that stage the role of the teacher was vital, since the teacher was guiding the students towards the right answers by means of providing synonyms, antonyms, short definitions, examples (hyponyms, sentences) or gestures. In other words, the teacher would use fairly typical techniques of presenting the new vocabulary.

The experimental group, on the other hand, was provided with more audio-visual stimuli. The task required them to watch the subtitled clips and match the words that were in the brackets with the definitions that were written down in the handout. The teacher introduced the idea of Integrated Subtitles, underlining the fact that they contained some extra information relevant for the lesson.

The students watched the clip and then had some time to think about the correct definition, so the role of the teacher was usually limited to checking whether the students identified the non-verbal meaning correctly. The task involved group work, which additionally increased the autonomy of the students.

Having presented the new vocabulary, the teachers moved to practical exercises. The stage of the controlled practice again involved two types of tasks different for each group: the control group was to complete the gaps with some of the words from the list introduced at the beginning of the lesson. The task contained fifteen sentences that were fairly obvious in terms of choosing the right answer, for they offered quite a detailed context. The students were working individually and at the end they would read out the answers, which the teacher would check and/or correct.

The experimental group was shown six more clips with bimodal subtitles without any extra information in brackets. Their task was to suggest appropriate words that they would insert in brackets. Due to technical limitations (no individual computers available) they were not able to create Integrated Subtitles themselves. The task was performed in groups, with the teacher approving of the correct answers and playing the clips with Integrated Subtitles prepared beforehand. Hence, at this stage the students watched the clips twice and had the opportunity to comment on their suggested answers.

The following activities involved less restricted practice which was meant to motivate the students to use the new vocabulary more freely without having to produce specific answers. In both groups the tasks involved pair work and were based on the dialogue from the lead-in: the control group was asked to work on the dialogue and improve it in terms of its readability and lexical variety. Then, they were asked to read it out, minding the paralinguistic content of the introduced verbs. The other group was supposed to suggest appropriate verbs for the dialogue from the lead-in, giving the hints in brackets and creating a type of a simple dialogue list. At the end each pair was asked to act out the dialogue.

The last stage of the lesson was a vocabulary quiz that was devised to measure the degree of vocabulary retention in both groups. Since it has been proven that subtitled films in the formal language teaching/learning context help to recognise and memorise vocabulary (e.g. Danan 1992, Neuman & Koskinen 1992), it was assumed that there might be different results for the two groups, since they had been exposed to various stimuli as well as contexts with varying degrees of attractiveness.

### 3.5  Vocabulary retention quiz: results

The quiz the students were asked to write at the end of the lessons contained two short tasks that would test both the recognition and production of the new vocabulary. The quiz was similar for both groups. The first task was based on matching techniques: the students were asked to match five verbs with their definitions, whereas the second task consisted in answering five questions concerning non-verbal behaviour of people (e.g. *What do people do when they feel relieved?*). In this case the number of possible answers was less restricted. Each correct answer was awarded one point, so in total it was possible to gain ten points.

The results for both groups were different, with the experimental group performing slightly better in both tasks (see Table 1).

*Table 1.  The retention test: results.*

| SUBTITLE GROUP | NO-SUBTITLE GROUP |
|---|---|
| **Vocabulary Quiz**<br>task one: matching words with their definitions (vocabulary recognition)<br>task two: answering the question, "What do people do…?" (vocabulary production) | |
| <ul><li>task one: 2.9</li><li>task two: 2.5</li><li>total: 5.4</li></ul> | <ul><li>task one: 2.3</li><li>task two: 2.0</li><li>total: 4.3</li></ul> |

In the subtitle group the results for the first task were moderately better: one student got all the answers correct, one student scored four points and no student scored less than two points. Four students recognised only two words correctly, a majority managed to recognise three words. Altogether, the average score for the first task in the subtitle group amounted to 2.9, with the standard deviation of 0.94. In the no-subtitle group the results were less varied: four students managed to recognise three words, five students scored two points and one was able to match only one word with the definition. The average score was therefore 2.3 and the standard deviation was 0.64.

The second task consisting in producing the right word was more difficult. The subtitle group averaged 2.5, with six students scoring two points, three gaining three points and one receiving four points. Again no student received less than two points. The standard deviation was 0.67. The average for the no-subtitle group was 2.0 and the standard deviation was 0.63. In this case two students received only

one point, and another two managed to earn three points. The majority remained at the level of two points.

The total results were consequently slightly disparate, with the averages of 5.4 and 4.3 points for the subtitle and the no-subtitle group, respectively. The students from both groups were subsequently asked to comment on the results. The members of the control group underlined that it was very difficult to recall the words, since they all sounded similar, were short and might be easily confused. Therefore, the level of motivation of the students to learn those words was at a fairly moderate level. The experimental group, on the other hand, showed more willingness to learn the words: in this case the students admitted that it was relatively easy to recall the words, since they had built specific associations with certain characters from the clips. They had also a particular scene in mind with a clear graphic context, with the additional reinforcement coming from the words projected on the screen.

The results of the quiz and above all the commentaries from the students helped to support the thesis about positive effects of using audiovisual material in the EFL classroom. It seems that in this case it was the multitude of stimuli involving the aural and visual channel that was of significant help together with the attractiveness of the film lesson. The subtitled film as well as the unexpected quiz at the end of the lesson contributed to better retention of certain lexical items, which was visible later on in the course of subsequent lessons.

## 4. Conclusions and need for further research

Obviously, the limitations of this very initial study do not allow any definite statements: due to its preliminary nature no tests for statistical significance were carried out. However, even in its limited scope, it may prove that a lesson involving films may be very beneficial, especially with the help of subtitles that will be tailored to the lesson objective. It caters for much greater motivation of students and facilitates the learning process thanks to integrating a number of senses and addressing various learning strategies. More advanced learners may benefit from the rich context offered by films, practice specific skills and enjoy the possibility of incidental learning. The teacher, on the other hand, can exercise full control over this seemingly random learning, since there is the possibility of "hiding" the lesson objective under the attractive content. It seems that modifying bimodal subtitles by adding features of SDH may help the teacher to highlight only the relevant elements.

It seems that the potential of Integrated Subtitles may go far beyond the use presented in the pilot study. The language of characters in films serves as an indexical

sign, being indicative of their origin, education, manners, social or geographical background, etc. It means, then, that Integrated Subtitles may be very helpful in drawing students' attention to specific sociolinguistic problems, emphasising certain intricacies of pronunciation, various language varieties or simply signalling that the language used by a certain character is incorrect (by using certain pre-arranged techniques, e.g. underlining the wrong expression). Not to mention the fact that they may serve as a good start to other challenging tasks.

Since film dialogues are supposed to reflect the real language to an extent (they tend to be less idiosyncratic and more norm-bound and may be defined as a secondary speech genre, Bakhtin 1986), it may be a good idea to teach grammar with Integrated Subtitles and prove that native speakers do use certain grammar structures. A short commentary in brackets may direct students' attention to a specific aspect of the language system and show the teacher is right. As for a vocabulary lesson similar to the one presented in the study, it may be a good idea to use colours with the words in brackets and classify them into specific word families (e.g. words used to describe laughter or loudness), which may facilitate the learning of new vocabulary.

Although there are certain premises indicating the educational potential of Integrated Subtitles, it seems that more data needs to be collected in order to prove its actual or long-term effectiveness and usefulness for language teaching. At this point it may be only suggested that Integrated Subtitles can help to refute the argument against film lessons found *inter alia* in Lonergan (1983; cf. Stoller 1995), who admitted that videos tend to be used for entertainment or pure language content rather than any effective teaching. On the contrary, with proper preparation they can be very helpful in the classroom, which, hopefully, may be exemplified with the pilot study presented in the article.

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