Audiovisual Translation Studies

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Introduction

The significant number of publications, specialised conferences and associations, and dedicated training programmes are clear signs of Audiovisual Translation's (AVT) vitality and growing prominence. So much so that no questions are raised regarding its relevance or rightful place within the wider discipline of Translation Studies. This very handbook and the fact that it includes a chapter solely dedicated to AVT is evidence of exactly that. However, the current stability somewhat silences the past efforts to place AVT on a par with other fields in Translation Studies, how recently that discussion took place, and the still ongoing discussion on what comes under the umbrella term of AVT.

Given this handbook's aim at reconstructing the evolution of Translation Studies and its metadiscourse, it will be useful to start this chapter by tracing some of the history of the term 'audiovisual translation' and what it refers to. In the early 2000s it was still possible to find several concurrent terms, namely *constrained translation* (Mayoral et al.1988; Titford 1982), *film translation* (Snell-Hornby 1988/1995), *screen translation* (Mason 1989), *film and TV translation* (Delabastita 1989), *audiovisual translation* (Luyken 1991) or *(multi)media translation* (Gambier and Gottlieb 2001). Terms such as *constrained translation* focused on technical limitations such as synchronicity, number of characters available, lipsync or reading speed and implicitly took literary translation as the norm, distinguishing AVT as a somewhat humbler relative. Terms such as *film*, *screen* or *TV translation* focused on genre or medium and have proved to be too limiting when confronted with the ever-growing variety of genres and multimedia products available. *Multimedia* seemed to have been a term already taken by other areas of studies such as communication studies, so a consensus appears to have been reached regarding the term *audiovisual translation*, broadly understood as encompassing 'the translation of programmes in which the verbal dimension is only one of the many shaping the communication process' (Díaz-Cintas 2010). This highlights the multisemiotic nature of the audiovisual text and distinguishes AVT as the type of translation that deals with source texts in which visual, oral and aural resources come together to make meaning. Typically, the translation modes included under the umbrella term of audiovisual translation are subtitling, dubbing, voice-over, surtitling, subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing (SDH), and audio description (AD).

Subtitling consists of rendering in writing the translation of the original dialogue, along with other verbal information that is transmitted visually (letters, banners, inserts) or aurally (lyrics, voices off) (Díaz-Cintas 2010). The development of digital technology of the

past few decades has brought considerable change to the subtitling process and multiplied the platforms in which it can appear. It will be important to distinguish between intralingual and interlingual subtitling, live (most often produced with voice-recognition software) and prepared subtitling, closed (activated by users) and open subtitling, automated (produced by machine translation), and creative subtitling (as named in McClarty 2014). *Dubbing* consists of replacing the original dialogue with another track in which the translated dialogue has been recorded (Chaume 2012). *Voice-over* consists of a revoicing of the original dialogue in a target language which is delivered simultaneously and in synchrony with the original dialogue (Franco et al. 2000). *Surtitling,* similarly to subtitling, consists of a written rendering of the audible words on stage displayed above/next to the stage during a live performance (Low 2002). *SDH,* also as a type of subtitling, consists of rendering in writing the translation of the original dialogue; however, unlike subtitling, it includes non-verbal sound information about character identification, sound effects, manner of speaking and music (Neves 2019). They can be intralingual or interlingual, open or closed and can be edited or verbatim. *Audiodescription* consists of an over imposed commentary that describes relevant visual resources for visually impaired viewers (Fryer 2016).

It is not a coincidence that AVT started receiving more attention when the linguistic approach to translation started being challenged in favour of more functional (Vermeer 1989/2012), cultural (Bassnett and Lefevere 1990), communicative (Hatim and Mason 1997), and post-structuralist approaches. However, it is also true that the ever-growing presence and distribution of audiovisual texts in everyone's daily life and work (and the need to translate them) made it almost impossible for Translation Studies (TS) to ignore audiovisual texts and their translation. The following sections will reflect on two key issues central to AVT, showing how these have challenged TS and some of its most basic concepts: the multimodal nature of the audiovisual source text and the means of production and reception of translated audiovisual texts.

Critical issues and topics

1. Multimodal nature of the audiovisual text

Back in 2001, when making the case for why the concept of (multi)media translation was relevant for TS, Gambier and Gottlied said that 'it shatter[ed] the very notion of translation' (2001: xix). To some this might sound an overstatement, but it would be difficult to overplay the impact AVT had on TS. By highlighting the role of visual and aural resources in meaning-making, AVT participated in the dethroning of the authoritative written text and broadened the concept of *text* from written text only to multisemiotic text. As early as 1989, Delabastita was mentioning nonverbal elements explicitly in his programme for the discipline and soon after Zabalbeascoa (1993) asked for the development of TS beyond the written text. Gottlieb (1994) went a bit further and proposed some new terminology, including the term 'polysemiotic text' to refer to text with two or more communication channels. The impact of AVT was obvious when the discussion in TS more broadly started to include categories such as 'audio-medial' (Reiss 1971/2000) and 'multimedial' (Snell-Hornby 1993) to distinguish texts with multiple channels. The multisemiotic nature of the source text challenged the

linguistic paradigm and perhaps unsurprisingly, became a natural challenger of key TS concepts such as *text* and *equivalence* until then solely focused on meaning expressed verbally and in writing. With this, also came new interpretative processes and situations involving new and different audiences (less passive and often involved in the process of translation), and new distribution platforms (see following section).

One can understand the level of disruption this first wave of discussion brought to TS; however, looking at the definitions of the different AVT modes (if for a moment we exclude SDH and AD, traditionally considered separately as assistive forms of AVT), we notice that the focus on medium/channel is still present to a large extent (the target text is always presented on screen) as well as the focus on translating verbal resources. For example, stage theatre translation and game localisation (also audiovisual texts) are commonly seen as separate areas of study and practice marked by the fact that they are not always on screen or that they involve processes of translation going beyond the verbal normally understood as *adaptation*. The same could be said regarding the majority of publications in AVT in the 1990s and early 2000s. Despite the wide acknowledgement of audiovisual texts as complex ensembles of resources of different natures, the focus mostly remained on the translation of verbal dialogue reducing nonverbal resources to context.

There are many contributing factors behind this focus on the verbal, from the literary background of most scholars in TS to the more mundane challenges related to the collection, analysis and publishing of/on audiovisual texts before the development of digital technology. However, there are three factors that deserve our attention: first, one cannot dismiss the impact of the general understanding of images and sounds as iconic. The focus on translating the verbal becomes less surprising when we consider that contrary to linguistic signs, nonverbal resources have long been understood as similar to and in a direct relation with the reality they represent, therefore in no need of further mediation. Second, translation theory was (and arguably still is) dominated by the concept of *equivalence*, itself focused on *verbal equivalence* and underpinned by the essentialist view of meaning as a stable entity which can be transferred from language to language and culture to culture (concepts normally taken as stable, well-defined and clearly delimited). Third, the film production and AVT industries developed separately resulting in a situation in which translators are presented with a finished product which cannot be manipulated.

Independently of the motivating factors, the implications of such understanding of audiovisual text and meaning-making are far reaching. Going back to the definitions of the different AVT modes, one can see that behind the focus on the verbal there are several implicit assumptions which seem to run contrary to the notion that audiovisual texts are complex meaning-making events involving resources of different natures. First, a clear distinction is made between the text (multisemiotic in nature) and the source text for translation (limited to the dialogue and other verbal elements on screen). This assumes that the meaning expressed by the different resources can be individualised and dealt separately in translation, while promoting the understanding of audio and aural elements as context. Second, the complex ensemble of links between audio, aural and oral elements becomes secondary and the focus is less on meaning and more on the written duplication of information expressed through the spoken dialogue. This is manifested in the rooted notion of synchronicity as one of the centre pillars of quality in audiovisual translation and assumes that

no further or different meanings are introduced when verbal resources are replaced by verbal resources in another language. It also assumes that audio and aural resources are to be engaged with directly or their *original* meaning might be lost. The concept of equivalence is thus also reduced to equivalence of verbal resources and it is never asked if the translated target text is equivalent to the source audiovisual text.

For research in audiovisual translation, this has promoted the often-mentioned focus on the verbal and curtailed the development of an AVT specific theoretical and analytical framework necessary to analyse complex audiovisual texts. For translation practice, the implications were varied. Initially, it promoted both the divorce between the production and the translation stages, solidifying the notion of audiovisual translation as 'additional' (Gottlieb 1992: 162) and logocentric, and the distinction between translator (responsible for the interlingual transfer) and spotter (responsible for timing and segmenting the text into subtitles). Later, with access to subtitling software in their personal computer, translators had the opportunity to access, segment and time the audiovisual text directly and more easily. This resulted in the merging of the translator and spotter roles and the emerging of the subtitler, but it has not transformed the logocentric approach to audiovisual translation. In fact, the advent of templates has reintroduced the division between those that translate and those that segment and time the subtitles as well as the notion of verbal equivalence. More recently, the possibility of having both the translation and spotting of subtitles being completed automatically by a computer or with the use of a CAT tool has only reinforced this notion even further.

The multimodal nature of the source text and the challenges it brings to the conceptual apparatus of the discipline is thus still a thorny issue yet to be truly discussed and resolved. Judging by the growing number of recent publications posing questions around the concepts of *equivalence*, *meaning-making* and even *translation* (Adami and Ramos Pinto 2020; Kaindl 2012; 2020; Marais 2019; Pérez-González 2014), one could even suggest that once secure in its placing within TS, AVT is now promoting a second wave of disruption in an attempt to truly address the issues raised by the multisemiotic nature of the audiovisual text.

Early on, Cattrysse (2001: 5) called our attention to the fact that, although 'imagery and icons usually cross borders more easily than the printed or spoken word, not all visuals function in a universal way', while Gambier (2006: 6) highlighted that 'no text is, strictly speaking, monomodal'. More recently, the advent of multimodality as an area of research in its own right seems to have given new life to the discussion. Multimodal social semiotics (MSS) has been particularly influential in TS through the works by Kress and van Leeuwen (2001; 2006) and Baldry and Thibault (2006). Contrary to Piercian semiotics, MSS brings greater emphasis to the making of meaning and highlights the relationship between form and meaning as purposeful and never entirely arbitrary. It introduces the concept of mode conceived as 'socially and culturally shaped set of resources for making meaning' (Bezemer and Kress 2008: 6) with different affordances resulting from their materiality and past use, that is, the fact that historically they have been employed by differences users, with different intentions and in different contexts. In this sense, resources such as images or sounds in a film do not have a more *natural* relation or resemblance with the world than language and previous knowledge is required for its use and interpretation.

It would be impossible to discuss the full proposal of MSS (see Adami 2017) in this chapter, but among the most influential aspects of this new approach are the social contextualisation of modalities, the understanding of modes as a result of cultural processes, the highlight of the functional entanglement of modes in meaning-making, and the acknowledgement of the close relationship between mode and medium. For translation, this has considerable implications that have only now started to be discussed (Adami and Ramos Pinto 2020; Kaindl 2012; 2020; Marais 2019; Pérez-González 2014). In what has already aptly been called 'Multimodal Translation Studies' (Kaindl 2020) there is space for a conceptual redefinition of *text*, *source text*, *equivalence* and *translation*. Scholars such as Kaindl reposition translation not as a language transfer process, but as a process through which texts are designed across cultural barriers and the translator as the text designer whose objective is 'not to understand the text himself/herself, but to produce texts for the needs of somebody else' (2012: 258). Acknowledging the fact that monomodal communication is the exception rather than the norm in contemporary communication (Kress and van Leeuwen 2001: 21), translation scholars adopting a multimodal approach are raising questions on how sound, images and verbal interact to make meaning rather than limiting the discussion to how sound and images contribute meaning to the verbal (Dicerto 2018). This means considering all modes involved in meaning-making and acknowledging that 'resources co-occurring with verbal resources are signs in their own right that might present different challenges to (different) viewers' (Adami and Ramos Pinto 2020). Language might be the most obvious target of translation to reach foreign audiences, but it is not the only one (Cattrysse 2001) because, as socioculturally shaped resources, modes other than verbal resources also present challenges to foreign audience and might need translation.

2. Means of production and reception

It has become a commonplace to emphasise the impact of internet and digital technology on media production and consumption, but it does seem to be the gift that keeps on giving as there are always new developments to mention and the impact of each new development is considerable. If in the early 2000s, Díaz Cintas (2005) was calling our attention to the possibilities opened up by the DVD and narrowcasting, now authors such as Cronin (2003) and Pérez-González (2013; 2014) are discussing the impact of globalisation, new platforms such as Youtube, the formation of internet communities and the destabilisation of traditional production workflows. The development of AVT is so intertwined with technology that any advances not only change the process but have the potential to change reception, the viewers' perception and understanding of translation (which in turn will impact on AVT and potentially promote new advances) and, not surprisingly, research.

When we consider the process, we are immediately struck by the fact that in the last 50 years, in subtitling, for example, we moved from needing an array of equipment (computer, external video player for VHS, TV monitor to watch, stopwatch), to being able to complete the entire process in our personal computer. To maximise productivity and convenience, subtitling software is constantly evolving and can now, among many other features, detect shot changes, display a waveform to indicate moments of speech/no-speech,

pre-define a series of features, allow for an array of colours and symbols, and place subtitles anywhere on screen. The integration of subtitling software and CAT tools will certainly continue to develop, but the impact of digital technology was felt not only on the equipment/software used to translate, but also on the workflows followed and the agents involved as it allowed for great decentralisation and the engagement of freelance translators spread globally. In this respect, the development of cloud computing has brought another great leap, especially for dubbing. Traditionally, dubbing happens in purpose-built in-territory studios with multiple-recording spaces, isolation booths and control rooms, requiring voice actors, directors, and sound engineers to travel to one location to record, direct and process, and prepare final materials. Cloud dubbing allows all these agents to work collaboratively while being thousands of miles apart making the process less time consuming and less expensive. In the relatively near future, the development of artificial intelligence will cause another great leap as it wide opens the fields of synthetic voice production as well as image/sound recognition and manipulation to a point in which automated subtitling and dubbing (with lip movement changes in post-production) might just become the new normal. Such developments will undoubtedly again reshape the discussion around equivalence and nonverbal resources in translation.

If we turn our attention to the medium, we went from projecting audiovisual text to presenting them on TV, VHS and the DVD. DVD was indeed the first big leap catapulting AVT industry into the global stage as it radically changed distribution, consumption and marketing of audiovisual texts. It also allowed for multiple language versions to coexist, the addition of *value added material* and, perhaps more importantly, it was the first step in increased interactivity and passing onto viewers some of the power regarding where/how/when to watch. The second big leap was internet 2.0 which brought the internet as a platform for audiovisual material and cloud services. The consequences have been fast and varied. Initially, the focus seemed to be on the emergence of websites acting as repositories of subtitles (both ripped from commercial DVDs and produced by non-professional subtitles) and the legal considerations they raised. But it is important to remember that these were part of a broader context that challenged traditional distribution structures, promoted the emergence of communities of non-professional translators and diluted the market distinction between dubbing and subtitling countries. We also witnessed the proliferation in terms of diversity and scope of audiovisual texts being localised which not only expanded the industry and opened new markets, but also led to the gradual merging of AVT and specialised translation and the application of CAT tools, translation memories and term bases in AVT (Flanagan 2009; Volk et al. 2010). More recently, new platforms such as digital channels and streaming services have emerged together with 3D technology and smart spectacles. This calls our attention to issues around medially and the fact that what and how we translate is also dependent on the medium and what it affords (Jones 2019).

However, the impact of the digital revolution goes beyond platforms and process, as it has deeply transformed reception and viewers' participation. This might have initially been limited to audiovisual translation, but it now impacts all areas of translation as it has fundamentally changed the way target audiences receive and understand translation. The linear model of communication in which elites were able to dictate and control the offer

within consolidated top-down structures (MacNair 2006) has been replaced by a non-linear model of communication driven by demand and one in which consumers dictate what they see as well as when, where and how they see it. They actively participate and shape the process of media production and consumption by choosing certain texts over others, by expressing their views (often instantaneously and visibly on screen), by distributing the texts themselves or translating them. The concept of target audience in TS can no longer be understood in terms of reception, but in terms of consumption, self-mediation and active participation.

Distribution companies have traditionally organised and mapped audiovisual markets onto nation-states assuming culturally homogenous target audiences. However, the de-materialisation of space mentioned by Cronin (2003) has promoted supraterritorial and interconnected audiences whose complexity and intersectionality cannot be addressed by essentialist notions of audience delimited by country. Audiences can now be more fruitfully understood as *communities* organised around shared interests and expectations which Pérez-González fittingly named 'communities of affinity' (2013; 2014). This means that the media industry can now be characterised by both 'a top-down corporate-driven process and a bottom-up consumer-driven process' known as 'media convergence' (Jenkins 2004: 37). Gradually leaving the age of mass-media behind, the media industry is moving towards targeted media supported by ever-more-powerful algorithms, but also by fostering interactivity and collaboration and by investing in audiovisual translation (see for example, Netflix's comprehensive subtitling and dubbing strategy or the development of automated captioning on Youtube). As discussed by Deuze, the era of media conversion brings with it the 'blurring [of] the lines between economics (work) and culture (meaning), between production and consumption, between making and using media, and between active or passive spectatorship of mediated culture' (2009: 148).

In this context, it will be important to note that the communities of viewers are now often producing content or translating content themselves. In fact, non-professional translation has known such growth and had such impact that it is no longer possible to discuss AVT or translation in general without considering the role and motivations of non-professional translators. The discussion no longer places non-professional translators only as the less expensive and illegal alternative to professional translation, but as participatory agents that contribute to more or less structured communities with varied intentions that range from political to aesthetic (Orrego-Carmona and Lee 2017). Pérez-González places this phenomenon within a wider trend towards a 'radical model of democracy' (2012: 335) in which individuals work (often collaborate) to promote specific values and agendas and provide viewers with an assumedly particular reading of the source text, a 'subjective spectatorial experience' (2012: 337).

Unshackled by industry norms and conventions and conscious of the in-depth cultural and genre expertise (O'Hagan 2008), ordinary people are proposing new daring forms of expression and intercultural communication that ultimately have questioned industry norms and conventions and allowed for more creative solutions. In an indirect challenge to the notion of translation as neutral transfer of meaning, its logocentric approach and its aim for invisibility, fansubbers and fandubbers are conscious of their role as intercultural brokers and take advantage of all resources made available by the medium. As described by authors such as Dwyer (2012), Nornes (2007), O'Hagan (2008), Pérez González (2014), and Rocio Banos

(2020) among others, these include dilution of a written text, manipulation of the typesetting, different positioning of the text on a screen and the experimental use of headnotes to define untranslatable words, gloss cultural connotations of visible objects, or explicit contextual aspects.

In addition to the challenge of the industry's status quo, this non-linear model of distribution opens horizontal lines of intercultural communication and new forms of civic engagement which ultimately opened up translation as a space where multiple understandings of the same source text can co-exist and where intercultural communication is accepted as complex and subjective. The audience is now an audience that consumes, produces, is more aware of the risks involved in translation and often discusses it online. As mentioned by Kang, cyberspace is increasingly 'an arena for forming, contesting, and negotiating perceptions about translation and its quality' (2015: 456). And this is exactly what caught the attention of institutions and companies that seek to engage citizens and users through crowdsourcing. Institutions such as the EU and non-profit companies such as TED – Technology, Entertainment and Design are reaching out to large virtual crowds on the internet (O'Hagan 2011) and inviting them to subtitle their content as an effective way to engage them with the content their produce and promote citizenship.

Main research methods

The research methods used in AVT are as varied as the areas in which the field has branched out. If investigating the history of AVT demands archival work, the study of the cognitive processes involved in the act of subtitling, for example, might demand more experimental methods. This chapter will focus on three main research methods: descriptive methods and the use of corpora, experimental methods and action research. These have been selected for their relevance in AVT, but also because these were areas in which AVT has either challenged the established practices or introduced new practices.

It would be impossible to map the entire domain of AVT Studies in one chapter, but one cannot overlook the relevance of Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) in AVT given that it was through the adoption of the empirical approach promoted by DTS, that AVT was brought to the attention of academic research. As an alternative to evaluative reviews of perceived quality, DTS proposes a focus on the product, drawing conclusions based on the analysis of existing translations. The translational relationship between source and target texts is understood as motivated by its context and the role of researchers is to uncover that context and mediating factors, instead of prescriptively dictating what translation should be. At its core, DTS places concepts such as (poly)systems, norms, laws and patronage (see Rosa 2018) which allowed AVT to be examined in terms of the various agents involved, the norms guiding translation decisions, power relations between systems and agents.

This proved to be an extremely powerful and productive approach capable of uncovering not only micro procedures and general strategies employed in the different audiovisual translation modes, but also general patterns of behaviour and correlations between those patterns and the wider context. New insight and important typologies have been developed regarding a variety of topics such as the subtitling or dubbing of humour, cultural references

(Pedersen 2011), compliments (Bruti 2009), linguistic variation (Ramos Pinto 2020), swearing and taboo (Baines 2015) and often the identified patterns have been correlated to its wider context of censorship forces, power relations and ideology. Understanding that translation never happens in a void nor is ever neutral or an invisible bridge between cultures, researchers have more recently also started to look at how language used is affected by race, class, gender, or political activism (De Marco 2012; Pérez-González 2012).

DTS has, however, been criticised for focusing too often on describing existing translation(s) and forgetting that such description was intended to support explanation and prediction through the formulation of regularities, tendencies, and general principles. Authors such as Pym (2001) have since early on identified the risk of accumulating fragmented knowledge achieved through a simple multiplication of case-studies that would reveal interesting and curious cases but would not allow to move forward to the ever promised explicative and contextualised generalisations. This lack of explicative power also explains the fact that this research has remained mostly academic and with limited impact on the profession.

It is thus not surprising to find the adoption of corpora-based methods in audiovisual translation as these allow researchers to go beyond the idiosyncrasies of the single case-study and support reliable generalisations and patterns that might span across cases, time and space. To put it succinctly, corpora consist of naturally occurring texts compiled in a principled manner, that is texts are selected according to specific criteria for the purpose of systematic analysis. Terminology will vary (Laviosa 2002), but it is possible to identify three main types of corpora: 'monolingual comparable corpora' are made up of texts in the same language. These are particularly suited to examine unique features of translated vs non-translated texts. 'Bilingual comparable corpora' compile non-translated texts in different languages allowing for contrastive analysis. Finally, 'parallel corpora' bring together a principled set of source and their respective target texts in a given language allowing to examine issues around translation shifts, translation strategies and procedures and more general questions such as equivalence and correlation with contextual elements such as date, genre, etc.

Many corpora have been compiled in AVT, but some of the most notable and larger are the Television in Words (TIWO) audiodescription corpus (Salway 2007), the Pavia Corpus of Film Dialogue (PCFD) (Pavesi 2014) and the Corpus de Subtitles Bilingues Inglés-Español (Rica Peromingo 2014). Wide corpora such as these have allowed researchers to identify patterns with a good degree of certainty and reach important generalisations but are still faced with serious challenges. In addition to the considerable number of resources necessary to compile, annotate and store large corpora, most corpora in AVT are still written or spoken corpora, that is, they collect the transcription of films' spoken dialogue with encoded relevant paralinguistic information as well as information on other visual and aural modes. Efforts have been made to build multimodal corpora (Heiss and Soffritti 2008), but the multimodal nature of the source text seems to bring some of the challenges discussed before presenting serious resistance to a methodology developed for the examination of linguistic features. The lack of a theoretical and analytical framework specific to AVT is noticeable in the challenges researchers face with tagging and annotating the corpora, for example. However, challenges also arise in relation to the fact that alignment might turn out to be impossible with

audiovisual text such as webpages constantly being updated or the difficulty in defining representativeness in relation to non-verbal modes (Soffritti 2019). The development of multimodal translational corpora will be relevant to other domains of TS, given that hardly any text is monomodal and that academic enquiry is expanding to texts such as websites, picture books, graphic novels, and news translation online. But its development might demand a methodological turn towards collaborative and interdisciplinary teams as well as the detailed publication of corpora criteria. Most corpora are compiled and assembled to investigate specific phenomena (for example, linguistic varieties, cultural references) and multi-purpose AVT corpora are still very uncommon, but the publication of the collection and tagging criteria could aid the compilation of larger repositories by having corpora composed for smaller studies later merged into larger corpora in support of wider studies and high-level generalisations.

In contrast with the descriptive approach focused on examined source and target texts already in existence, experimental methods of research collect data directly through an experiment in which deliberate steps are taken to ensure the production of data with the sole purpose of refuting or proving a specific hypothesis. It would be impossible to provide a complete overview of all experimental methods employed by researchers in AVT, so we will focus on eye-tracking (often used in triangulation with questionnaires), arguably the most used experimental method in AVT. In fact, it would not be abusive to say that AVT introduced eye-tracking methodology to translation studies given that the first studies developed in Belgium by d'Ydewalle and his colleagues report back to the 1980s. The focus of the initial studies was on attention allocation and subtitling which is not entirely surprising when we consider that at the time subtitling presented the unique case of a target text in which the translation was presented in a different format (now written and not spoken) while still requiring access to the meaning expressed visually. Initial findings included that viewers tend to focus on only one or two words per subtitle (d'Ydewalle et al. 1985), that variables such as genre and viewers' age impact on the time spent looking at subtitles (d'Ydewalle and Van Rensbergen 1989), that reading behaviour is elicited automatically as soon as subtitles are presented on screen (d'Ydewalle et al. 1991).

Since then, the number of studies has increased exponentially as have the complexity of the research questions asked by researchers. Crucial data has been collected on the impact of standard/reversed/intralingual subtitling on reading behaviour (Bisson et al. 2012), of literal and non-literal translation strategy (Ghia 2012), of word frequency and lexical cohesion on cognitive effort (Moran 2012), of the speed at which subtitles are presented (Szarkowska et al. 2011), of line segmentation on eye-movement and comprehension (Perego et al. 2010; Rajendran et al. 2013), of subtitles crossing over a shot change (Krejtz et al. 2013), of innovative subtitling practices (Caffrey 2009; Fox 2016). Another area of great development has been the study of reception of SDH and AD by audiences with visual or auditory impairments (Jensema et al. 2000; Mazur and Kruger 2012). The focus of most experimental studies has for now remained on attention distribution, the impact of certain variables on cognitive load, and subtitles comprehension, but it is likely that more attention will soon be paid to film interpretation and how viewers make sense of the multimodal ensemble they are presented with. Other audiovisual translation modes such as dubbing are also likely to be the target of experimental studies (Di Giovani and Romero-Fresco 2019).

Looking at the studies mentioned above, it is easy to conclude that experimental methods in AVT have been traditionally linked to the use of eye-tracking methodologies and that these have in turn been intrinsically linked to the study of reception. In addition to the data collected, the application of experimental methods brought new insights to the old concept of reception, which until then had only been approached through a sociocultural perspective (Brems and Ramos Pinto 2013). It is also bringing to the fore some of the weaknesses of much of the research in TS, still very fragmented and dominated by small research teams and evident by the number of single-authored publications. As the complexity of the research question increases and the capacity of data collection and storage makes experimental studies easier to implement, the need for collaborative research in larger and interdisciplinary teams becomes all the more evident. It will also demand a different way of reporting and sharing data – as relevant as they are, most experimental studies conducted do not share the same terminology or offer enough detail on the procedures followed, making it difficult to compare or even aggregate data in the pursuit of more robust generalisations. To go beyond the single-case approach, it will be essential to standardise methodologies and take full advantage of digital publication platforms that allows us to share the full body of data and analysis.

The potential of experimental methods, however, goes far beyond the study of reception or the use of eye-tracking. It will be important to mention the growing interest in triangulating eye-tracking data with qualitative data collected by questionnaires or with neurological data through the EEG and psychometrics (Kruger et al. 2016). Experimental methods have also been essential in areas other than reception studies, namely process studies (Massey and Jud 2020).

The final method this chapter will focus on is action research (AR). Introduced in Translation Studies through AVT, action research combines action and reflection, theory and practice and presents itself as a participative and practically oriented approach in which participants, researchers and other stakeholders actively participate in a cyclic process (Cravo and Neves 2007). It aims to achieve 'practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people' (Reason and Bradbury 2001: 1) and in this sense it is also an interventionist process. Often described as a spiral, this is a multi-staged and cyclical process marked by continuous evaluation, reflection, action and re-evaluation in which a new stage builds on the knowledge produced by the previous stage and consequent refinement of processes and action (Cravo and Neves 2007). The first study adopting AR focused on SDH (Neves 2005) and since then several other studies focused on accessibility have used AR. The need to develop and implement new practices to address recently identified needs of impaired communities, made AR an ideal research method and so the link between research on accessibility and action research comes as no surprise. However, what distinguishes simple practice from AR is the adoption of a rigorous mixed methods approach in which qualitative and quantitative methods are used to examine different issues making sure that triangulation is used to safeguard the results' validity and reliability. The aim is thus both 'the achievement of practical and tangible results with impact on people's lives' and the ability to 'feed [back] into the knowledge base of the scientific fields involved through the use of established […] scientific methods' (Neves 2018: 55).

Great advancements and practical solutions continue to be reached in areas such as SDH (Szarkowska et al. 2011), audio description (Fryer 2018; Lopez et al. 2018) and

accessible e-learning (Patiniotaki 2019); however, more recently, AR is also being used in areas other than accessibility, namely process research and the use of cloud-based tools (García-Escribano 2020).

Research in audiovisual translation, and the variety of methods used, has given great strides since the early single-case studies of the 1980s. Given the intricate connection between audiovisual translation and technological advancements, it seems safe to predict that research in audiovisual translation will develop further to include new genres and platforms which, together with new translation tools and workflows, will redefine target audiences and their relationship with audiovisual products and translation. However, and in part for this exact same reason, it will be crucial, on the one hand, to develop historical research and analytical and storing methods capable of addressing the challenges brought by ever changing platforms and file types. On the other hand, it will be important to work towards a theoretical framework specific to audiovisual translation and capable of addressing the issues brought by the multimodal nature of the source text. One thing seems certain about AVT, it will keep on changing, adapting and developing along with new technological, societal and conceptual developments. In turn, it will most likely bring new challenges and open new doors to our discussion and understanding of translation.

Further Reading

Kaindl, Klaus (2020) "A Theoretical Framework for a Multimodal Conception of Translation" in *Translation and Multimodality: Beyond Words*, Monica Boria, Ángeles Carreres, María Noriega-Sánchez and Marcus Tomalin (eds). London and New York, Routledge: 49–70.
This chapter builds on Kaindl (2012) and goes a step further by linking contemporary approaches to multimodality and semiotic theories of multimediality. Its core argument is that the three intertwined concepts of mode, medium and genre form the basis for a translation-theoretical approach capable of overcoming logocentrism in translation studies.

Pérez-González, Luis (2010) "'Ad-hocracies' of Translation Activism in the Blogosphere: A Genealogical Case-Study" in *Text and Context,* Mona Baker, Maeve Olohan and Maria Calzada Pérez (Eds). Manchester: St Jerome Publishing: 259–87.
This chapter explores the ways in which translation is increasingly being appropriated by non-professional translators that see translation as a space for political activism.

O'Hagan, Minako (ed) (2007) *Manga, Anime and Video Games: Globalizing Japanese Cultural Production - Perspectives: Studies in Translatology* (Special issue) 14 (4).
This special issue is devoted to the globalisation phenomenon of Japanese cultural production of manga, anime and video games. It questions the limits of audiovisual translation and highlights the importance of examining side-by-side texts that normally are the object of different modes of translation and, as a result, are considered independently in different Translation Studies domains.

Related topics

Institutionalisation of Translation Studies; Functional Translation Theories; Corpus-based Translation Studies; Experimental Translation Studies; Semiotics of Translation; Meaning in Translation; Acceptability/Adequacy; Source and Target Texts.

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