
Pilar Orero (ed.). *Topics in Audiovisual Translation*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2004, 225 pp.

The advent of technologically advanced mass media dissemination and multimedia communication has prompted the emergence of Audiovisual Translation as one of the most relevant and enterprising fields of contemporary Translation Studies.

Pilar Orero, editor of *Topics in Audiovisual Translation*, defines Audiovisual Translation as the term generally used to classify all “multisemiotic transfers,” including production and postproduction translation in any format as well as the relatively recently developed alternative audiovisual communication for the hearing and vision-impaired. This compilation of essays is inspired by a series of guest lectures presented in 2001 by renowned Translation Studies academics and practitioners for the inauguration of the new postgraduate program in Audiovisual Translation at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. The volume is com-

prised of five interrelated sections: (I) professional perspectives, (II) Audiovisual Translation Theory, (III) Ideology and Audiovisual Translation, (IV) Teaching Audiovisual Translation, and (V) Audiovisual Translation research.

The first section of the collection deals not with theory or research in Audiovisual Translation, but rather the application of this concurrent medium of interlingual communication to practical vocation. The first specialist, Xènia Martínez of the Barcelona-based company DigitSound, describes the various stages of the process of dubbing that are particular to Spain, and more specifically Catalonia with its diversity of languages. Diana Sanchez, a professional translator and editor for the Barcelona subtitling company Imaginables, describes and analyzes in her essay the procedure for dubbing and subtitling in teams. The description and deconstruction of the four common methodological approaches to subtitling (1. Pre-translation→ Adaptation→ Spotting, 2. Pre-translation→ Spotting → Adaptation, 3. Adaptation→ Spotting→ Translation, and 4. Translation/ Adaptation→ Spotting) illustrates

the absence of a standardized universal approach to subtitling.

In the second section, the theoretical framework for the understanding and application of Audiovisual Translation is established through the contributions of three scholars in the field. Jorge Diaz Cintas, a professor at Roehampton University in London, appraises the validity and functionality of useful concepts from Descriptive Translation Studies as applied to Audiovisual Translation. Although seemingly incongruent with the professional application of Audiovisual Translation as described in the first section, Frederic Chaume Varela of Universitat Jaume I in Spain proposes an alternative to current methodological approaches: “synchronization,” as Chaume Varela defines it, considers genres and text types, language and culture, professional context and viewer. The final contributor in the theory section, Eduard Bartoll from yet another university in Barcelona, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, establishes a comprehensive framework that encompasses the expansive range of existing forms of media subtitling in the industry.

The third section entitled “Ideology and Audiovisual Transla-

tion” concentrates on the political implications of this form of media translation through two studies, one on the dynamic of bilingualism in Spain, and the second on the commercial implications of the translation market. Rosa Agost examines the relation between cultural and linguistic transmutation that are the results of translating from original to target languages. Henrik Gottlieb explains the market perspective of the unidirectional flow of less expensive translations from one locality to other regions and the consequent hindrance of cultural and linguistic diversity.

Section four addresses the pedagogy of Audiovisual Translation. Aline Remael of the Hoger Instituut voor Vertalers en Tolken, Hogeschool Antwerpen in Belgium, emphasizes the importance of up-and-coming translators learning about the context of film narrative and dialogue to complement an understanding of screen writing techniques so they can be successful at the production of meaningful subtitles. Josélia Neves from the Portuguese university Escola Superior de Tecnologia e Gestão do Instituto Politecnico de Leiria, presents the case that students who study translation demonstrate better language

skills and awareness for use in other fields of study because translation, specifically audiovisual translation, necessarily requires such a diverse range of language skills. In collaboration with Carlos Dorado and Miguel Amador, the editor of this volume, Pilar Orero, presents a compelling account of the innovative on-line postgraduate program in Audiovisual Translation at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. The primary function of this collection of essays on related subjects within the scope of Audiovisual Translation is to highlight their pedagogical value.

The fifth, and final section of the book is dedicated to current research in the field of Audiovisual Translation. Francesca Batrina begins the section by proposing five areas of translation: the study of the screenplay, film adaptation, audience design, pragmatics, and Polysystems theory. They all concentrate on final products of the industry of media communication that the author believes should be researched in the future by Audiovisual Translation experts. Batrina claims that research should address “the economic and sociocultural geography of audiovisual translation” to better under-

stand “questions of power, control and the dependence in Europe on the audiovisual products coming from the United States” (165). Yves Gambier of Finland contributes an article in French on film translation in which he coins a new term “tradaption.” Despite being considered a less-studied field of contemporary Translation Studies, Eva Espasa argues in her article that documentaries should be accorded the same prestige as mainstream film translation. Pioneering the blueprint for documentary translation, Espasa analyzes the protean quality of documentaries and dispels the two common misconceptions associated with translation of documentaries: first, that a documentary is not a film, and secondly, that a translation of a documentary is not necessarily audiovisual. In the final essay of the volume, Vera Santiago presents a concise analysis of closed subtitling in Brazil that also includes provisions for the accommodation of the nation’s hearing-impaired community.

The collection of diverse essays by professional specialists and leading academics compiled and edited by Pilar Orero in *Topics in Audiovisual Translation* provides a comprehensive framework

for the understanding, teaching, research and application of this emerging field within Translation Studies. Although intended for students and academics of Audiovisual Translation, the thorough explication of terminology and the clearly delineated parameters of the field of study contribute to the

accessibility of this volume for the general public. Given the unprecedented speed of technological advance across the world, *Topics in Audiovisual Translation* provides insights into an important manifestation of our contemporary media-oriented society.

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