

**Sanderson, John (ed.) (2005). *Research on Translation for Subtitling in Spain and Italy*. Murcia: Publicaciones de la Universidad de Alicante, pp 95.
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This third delivery on Audiovisual Translation (AVT) by Senior Lecturer and theatre translation specialist John Sanderson must be welcomed for at least two reasons: a) first, because this book is the exquisite result of some selected papers given at the 4th International Conference on AVT held in Alicante, thus making the University of Alicante one of the hot spots of the European AVT map; b) and second, because it valiantly tries to show that subtitling also has its own place, and its right to live, in two traditional strongholds in the use of dubbing –Spain and Italy. It is this last point of departure that I most agree with, since John Sanderson seems to rebel against the preconceived idea that research on subtitling can only be done in subtitling countries –and the other way round, as far as dubbing is concerned. It is not surprising, though that we can find interesting pieces of research on subtitling in Spain and Italy, since these two countries seem to be a step ahead as far as general research on AVT is concerned.

Sanderson's introduction of the book links this present volume with the two last volumes edited by him. Indeed, *¡Doble o Nada!* (2001) and *Traductores para Todo* (2002) offered a view on research on AVT in the turn of the century, with some articles that have been quoted extensively in Spanish AVT bibliographies. The fact that this volume has been published in English, and the fact that it focuses on subtitling, constitute a leap forward with regard to other miscellaneous volumes which, although necessary in a still young field of study, are sometimes a bit heterogeneous in content and structure.

Sanderson claims that the Alicante Conference in AVT is “the only academic event on audiovisual translation held regularly in Spain” (9), but he seems to forget the also four editions of another important meeting point in Spain as far as AVT is concerned –the University of the Basque Country at Vitoria, and its priceless *Trasvases Culturales: Literatura, Cine, Traducción*, organised by the research group TRACE (TRANslation and CEnsorship). Nevertheless, Sanderson pays a tribute to the TRACE researchers, as well as to the Catalan-Valencian researchers, who in his opinion, have “always been in the frontline of this research” (9).

He finally opens a very interesting debate on the role of subtitling in traditional dubbing countries, by discussing on the one hand, the important change that DVDs have introduced in these countries, which can now also enjoy subtitled versions of dubbed films, and also by discussing the false idea that subtitled films are not profitable to cinema houses.

This volume includes five selected articles, being the first one "The ever-changing world of subtitling: some major developments", by the renowned researcher in subtitling Jorge Díaz-Cintas. His article analyses "how the outstanding technological advances taking place in the last few years have a dramatic effect on the contemporary reception of audiovisual productions and, consequently, on the mediating translation for its assimilation by other cultural contexts" (11). In his own words: "Audiovisual Translation (AVT) in general, and subtitling in particular, has a distinctive identity based on the specific constraints imposed by the audiovisual medium. It is for this reason that AVT and technology go hand in hand, and technical advances usually have an immediate and considerable impact both on subtitling practice and from the practitioner's perspective, and also on the perception of subtitling we have as viewers and consumers" (17).

These last years Díaz-Cintas keeps arguing that the world of audiovisual media is in constant changes and that "translation modes are not set in stone as some would like to believe" (18). True as it is, however, it seems that traditional subtitling and dubbing countries will not abandon their respective habits in the near future. All in all, new technologies and, especially, the possibility of digitizing images support the author's main line of argument. After critically discussing machine translation, he exposes the new types of subtitling that new technologies have made possible and that new audiences demand. This review is really appealing and will help the reader update his/her knowledge about new types of AVT. In my opinion, section five of the article is also extremely interesting: under the title "A glimpse to the future", Díaz-Cintas masterly discusses the role of teaching in this present new technological era. According to his line of argument, teachers should not stick to their old exercises and teaching practices in the classroom, since both the industry and the market demand new skills and new contents in AVT courses.

The second article is written together by Silvia Bruti and Elisa Perego. The title advances the content of the article: "Translating the expressive function in subtitles: the case of vocatives". Based on the tradition of investigating pragmatic meaning in translation, this article tries to check whether pragmatic meaning is lost in subtitling due to the necessary process of reduction that dialogues undergo. It is a detailed and exhaustive study empirically tested in four English-speaking films subtitled into Italian.

Contrary to the research previously made on this issue, Bruti and Perego show that most of the times pragmatic meaning is kept in subtitling, though many vocatives are lost in the process of translation. This contradicts Hatim and Mason's contribution to the topic (1997), and even Mason's (1991) which is not cited in the article, especially in those cases in which "omissions are criteria-based" (36), i.e., in cases of repetitions,

redundancies with the images, etc. According to the authors "it can be argued that the expressive meaning conveyed by vocatives is not completely lost in the translated subtitles. A good percentage of them are, in fact, retained" (46).

They also point out that "translators do not omit vocatives artlessly" (46), thus battling the old idea that translations have to be assessed according to our subjective criteria of what should be kept and what should be omitted. Their descriptive and empirical approach, therefore, sheds new light into the previous prescriptive studies that either blamed the translator's ability or just complained about losses in translation. It must also be noticed that the author's recognize they do notice a loss only in the cases of general descriptions and when there are no cross-connections with other codes. This alleged loss conveys an increase in the cognitive effort to understand the interpersonal meaning of the situational context. But again one could wonder when dialogues are not cross-connected with other codes, especially if we take into consideration not only visual codes, but also sound codes such as paralinguistic codes, music and special effects. Maybe these are such isolated cases that they cannot be taken as representative cases.

Patrick Zabalbeascoa, in "The curse of conflicting norms in subtitling: a case study of Grice in action" discusses "the sort of problems that may arise from applying certain subtitling norms, namely omission, reduction and brevity" (49). He analyses the translation of the dialogues in the film *The Curse of the Jade Scorpion* (Woody Allen, 2001). Based on Grice's principle of cooperation, he analyses several blatant flaws in the Spanish translation of Allen's dialogues and states that "compensatory strategies might provide a more satisfactory solution than straightforward reduction" (50). Indeed he also offers alternative witty versions in which both reduction and fidelity to the original text are kept. One could argue that no time codes for his alternative versions are supplied, no reading speed has been established, and no spotting of the source text is provided, but in the end Zabalbeascoa's academic exercise tries to convince the reader that omission and reduction do not necessarily mean an impoverishment of the text. On the contrary, the skilled and well trained translator can always manage to find alternative solutions complying both with pragmatic and semantic meaning, as well as with professional conventions.

Annamaria Caimi radically changes the topic of these last two articles and deals with the role of subtitling in second language learning. "Subtitling in a cognitive perspective to encourage second language learning" is an article that could be placed in the still unexplored domain of Applied Translation Studies. Based on Dual Coding Theory, the article assumes that "memory consists of two separate but interrelated codes for processing information –one verbal and the other visual" (67). Therefore, the use of subtitled films in second language learning environments can

help teachers and students understand that “meaning is not a mere property of utterances, but it is the product of interactive polysemiotic systems that merge with each human being’s knowledge base” (75).

Multimedia products can then be used as teaching aids, since “they can enhance the development of phonetics, vocabulary and grammar, but above all, they allow a direct analysis of the multifaceted channels of pragmatic knowledge by focusing simultaneously on nonverbal communication related to movement such as gestures, glances, and the use of space in social and interpersonal situations” (75). The article encourages language teachers to use subtitled films in their language classes, thus overcoming the epoch in which the target language was avoided and even forbidden in second language learning environments.

Finally, Pilar Orero and Javier Franco close the volume with a very appealing article entitled “Research on audiovisual translation: some objective conclusions or the birth of an academic field”. They begin their article discussing the marginalization of translation and, especially, of audiovisual translation, compared to the study of canonic texts. Nevertheless, the growth of audiovisual translation research has been noticeable in the last two decades and that is why the authors present here the evolution of research in this field from 1931 till 2000. In their words “This article attempts to draw a global picture of the international research lines on AVT with two main aims: to establish a chronological list showing the development of the basic topics of interest within AVT, and to suggest some future steps to be taken for a coherent development of the discipline” (81). In order to do so, they take all data from the invaluable database called BITRA (http://cv1.cpd.ua.es/tra_int/usu/buscar.asp), a personal project of Javier Franco’s developed during this last decade, which comprised in 2005 more than 26,000 entries, in 2007 hosts over 31,000. After discussing the pros and cons of BITRA, the authors offer us a table comparing figures of total entries in BITRA with AVT entries, thus showing that the 1991-2000 decade “experienced an unprecedented sixfold rise: from 71 entries in the 1980s to 646 in the 1990s, whereas publications on translation in general kept on growing at an important rate but, comparatively, “only” doubled their presence (from 5,000 to 11,000)” (87). These figures make clear that audiovisual translation has definitively emerged as a field on its own. These data help the authors state that “It seems obvious that a move from a general approach to a systematic and detailed study is only possible when the building blocks of a general theoretical framework have been laid as the foundations of the field” (88).

It is also highly recommendable to take a look at the older contributions in our field, especially the ones from 1930 till 1970, which have been usually neglected in AVT state of the art articles. The authors also consider Luyken’s contribution (1991) one of the seminal research books in our field, and highlight the role of international conferences, the interest on AVT training, working and professional conditions, and the role of Spain

and Italy as traditional dubbing countries, which now have become centres of AVT research. In the chronological review of Spanish landmarks, though, I have missed the role of Prof. Roberto Mayoral in the birth of AVT in Spain, together with the students' periodical *Babel*, where his first contributions on AVT appeared. Final references, on the other hand, do not correspond with those cited along the article.

Summing up, this volume presents a compilation of five articles, and an interesting introduction, which analyze the specific requirements of translation for subtitling from different perspectives, the new technological advances in this field, the role of subtitling in second language learning and an interesting overview of AVT research in the 20th century. It is important to highlight that the volume is devoted to subtitling with articles written by Spanish and Italian lecturers, thus contradicting the cliché that dubbing countries can only do research on dubbing.

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