

**Díaz Cintas, Jorge (ed.) (2008) *The Didactics of Audiovisual Translation*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins. 263 pp. + 1 CD-ROM.  
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It seems that audiovisual translation (AVT) has finally found its glass shoe and become a princess. At least that seems to be the case according to Díaz Cintas, a well-known leading scholar in this field and editor of this book, when he mentions that “the Cinderella mantle that has surrounded this area of knowledge seems to have (partially) evaporated” (1). In the introductory chapter, he offers an accurate review of the evolution of different aspects related to AVT, such as its visibility within the field of Translation Studies, the different topics discussed in AVT research, the appearance of new publications, its role in foreign language teaching, or the current status of AVT training and its presence in universities.

As Díaz Cintas explains, translation training has been dealt with in numerous works, both theoretically and practically. However, that is not the case of AVT training, to which very few works have been devoted (for example, and only partially, Gambier, 1998; Agost and Chaume, 2001; or Zabalbeascoa, Santamaria, and Chaume, 2005). In fact, this volume could be considered the first one to tackle the issue of AVT training in full, aiming to provide AVT trainers with a good deal of ideas and exercises and to make the reader “take an active role and ‘do,’ not just read” (10).

The book is divided into four well-structured parts and gathers fifteen outstanding contributions from well-known scholars, academics and professionals, all sharing that “provision of high quality teaching is *sine qua non*” (11).

The first part (which includes three chapters) is entitled “Inside AVT” and is devoted to discuss “two of the areas that should form the foundations of any course on AVT: the semiotics of the audiovisual product and the value of screenwriting in the training of audiovisual translators” (11).

The first chapter, “The nature of the audiovisual text and its parameters,” is written by Zabalbeascoa. He approaches AVT from different angles, always keeping in mind that “The point of theoretical thinking is to gain insight, not to put blinkers on the translator or the scholar” (37). He pays attention, for example, to the nature of textual communication, the semiotics of AVT, nonverbal elements, the concept of constrained translation, or the relationships between the constituent elements of audiovisual texts (in/coherence, redundancy, contradiction, complementarity, and aesthetic quality) and the way they move along the double axis (audio/visual and verbal/nonverbal) that he proposes.

The second chapter, "Screenwriting and translating screenplays," is written by Cattryse and Gambier, who argue that screenwriting should be part of will-be audiovisual translators training, all within a transdisciplinary approach since "The training of translators of scripts will have to go hand-in-hand with several other disciplines" (54). From that assumption, they describe the screenwriting process and discuss the different types of documents that are generated in its different steps, building bridges between screenwriting and translating.

Remael's contribution is entitled "Screenwriting, scripted and unscripted language: what do subtitlers need to know?" In her chapter, she focuses on subtitles, which she considers a special form of translation, and also values the role of screenplays in the training of future subtitlers. She makes the interesting distinction between virtual screenplays ("the story as it has been transformed from the page to the screen") and physical screenplays ("one version or other of the written text, whether pre- or post-production") (58). She also distinguishes between film dialogue (scripted language) and impromptu speech (spontaneous language).

The second part of this volume, "Hands-on experience in AVT," includes seven contributions. As its title suggests, this part "is eminently practical and has the added value of covering all the main AVT modes" (12).

In "Subtitler training as part of a general training programme in the language professions," Kruger considers the training component of tertiary programmes in language related professions. Overall, he advocates for the integration of specific training (in subtitling) with generic training for the language professions, since otherwise "the training we offer has little chance of gaining the trust of employers" (87). He substantiates his position mostly via reference to two BA programmes offered at the North-West University in South Africa.

Díaz Cintas also contributes to this volume with a chapter entitled "Teaching and learning to subtitle in an academic environment," in which he combines a theoretical and practical approach to the teaching of subtitling, being at the same time consistent with the philosophy underlying the Bologna Process. In his opinion, "When it comes to the need for language transfer in this ever more globalised world," subtitling appears as "the most popular translation mode" (90). For him, "the role of properly training newcomers is essential if high standards are to be maintained in subtitling" and "the academic sector has the social responsibility of offering translation [...] students a solid preparation" (103). From these assumptions, he outlines a course on subtitling, including many activities and some audiovisual material to be found on the CD-ROM that comes with this book.

Bartoll and Orero's contribution, "Learning to subtitle online: learning environment, exercises, and evaluation," analyses the impact of new

technologies in education and addresses the issue of virtual learning through online courses, which they differentiate from distance courses and define as “a complex [and interactive] format where digital technology and communication are exploited to create a learning environment where learning material can be downloaded” (105). To exemplify this possibility, they provide the reader with details about the subtitling module that is taught at the *Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona* as part of an online MA degree.

In “Teaching voice-over: a practical approach,” Matamala addresses “one of the less known and less taught modes of audiovisual translation” (13). This chapter fills a gap by dealing with this AVT mode from a didactic angle. To illustrate the way this practice can be trained, Matamala uses the curricular design of the MA module on voice-over taught at the *Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona*, and in a more applied second section she gathers a series of exercises for students (some clips are included on the CD-ROM). She argues for a specific teaching of voice-over, since it “is an AVT mode with its own particularities and with such constraints that it deserves specific training” (127).

Chaume devotes his chapter, “Teaching synchronisation in a dubbing course: some didactic proposals,” to the different types of synchronisation in dubbing and to the teaching of some strategies and techniques that can be of great help for AVT trainees. The different didactic proposals that he gathers are of great interest and usefulness, since they are presented as “prototypical exercises” whose application is not reduced to a single language pair (138). All in all, it is a chapter whose main goal is to provide tools for trainers to make students “understand the importance of lip-sync”, “one of the major problems of translation for dubbing, and also one of its main characteristics” (140).

As Díaz Cintas explains, the contribution by Bernal Merino (“Training translators for the video game industry”) addresses an activity that, in spite of a growing industry, has not been subjected to much academic consideration: the translation of video games. In his chapter, Bernal Merino makes an effort to try to change this current state of affairs. He states that it is about time for higher education translation departments to start teaching video game translation more systematically, and suggests a three-step approach towards such implementation. He also argues for specialised graduates rather than “resourceful but isolated individual[s],” and claims that “Universities [...] should start offering modules in this field of specialisation in order to meet industry needs with appropriately trained graduates” (155).

In “Teaching audiovisual translation in a European context: an inter-university project,” Toda tells us about the collaboration of five EU countries (Belgium, Finland, Germany, Iceland, and Spain) in the development of a project centred on teaching AVT to undergraduate

students via intensive courses in dubbing, subtitling, voice-over, and translation of web pages. In his opinion, "approaches of this kind, which also allow for the interaction between the academic and the professional worlds, are definitely a step forward in the effective teaching of audiovisual translation" (168).

Part 3, "AVT for special needs," has two chapters and "is centred on two relatively new professional practices aimed at facilitating access to the audiovisual media to people with sensory impairment" (15).

In her contribution, "Training in subtitling for the d/Deaf and the hard-of-hearing," Neves focuses on the specificity of this practice, which demands for translators to develop certain skills additional to the ones required by subtitling. The main interest of this chapter is that Neves talks about SDH from a didactic perspective, suggesting exercises for possible SHD trainees and, on the whole, firmly advocating for the inclusion of SHD training in a greater number of AVT university programmes, since "Bringing these subjects into the classroom in a structured syllabus will contribute towards the development of new competences and new professional opportunities and will also stimulate social responsibility towards people with disabilities" (187).

In "Audio description: the visual made verbal," Snyder deals with this accessibility mode from a pedagogical perspective. He makes use of the case study of a film to illustrate the different ways in which audio description can be presented to students, suggesting some exercises and including for these purposes some audiovisual material on the accompanying CD-ROM. It is also of interest the list of skills of the professional audio describer that, based on his own experience as a describer, he proposes: observation, editing, language, and vocal skills. Taking a similar line to Neves, he expresses that "with the development of more well-trained practitioners on the art of audio description, we will come closer to making 'accessibility for all' a reality" (198).

The three chapters in Part 4, "AVT in language learning," draw our attention to "The potential of subtitles, both intralingual and interlingual, to help learn foreign languages" (16).

Díaz Cintas and Fernández Cruz's contribution, "Using subtitled video materials for foreign language instruction," adopts a general perspective to discuss the benefits that using subtitled materials can bring to second or foreign language learning. They make a case for the use of that kind of material for this type of instruction, and to support their argument they present the results of different experiments conducted by linguists and psycholinguists: "In a society ruled by the power of the image and flooded by audiovisual programmes, it seems only natural that audiovisual subtitled material should play a more prominent role in foreign (and native) language instruction" (214).

In "Tailor-made interlingual subtitling as a means to enhance second language acquisition," Pavesi and Perego take on a more specific perspective to focus on "the efficacy of interlingual subtitles on spontaneous, incidental second language acquisition" and to discuss "some major acquisition processes to be considered in the writing of SLA-oriented subtitles" (215). Thus, they pay attention to incidental language acquisition (rather than to formal language acquisition) and to the creation of subtitles for second language training (rather than to the use of subtitles in the classroom).

In her chapter, "The educational use of subtitled films in EFL teaching," Santiago Araújo also considers the use of subtitles in second language training, this time concentrating on the way they can help enhance the learner's oral and aural skills. She describes the main aspects of a research project carried out at the *Núcleo de Linguas* of the State University of Ceará, whose main objective was "to test the assumption that the use of subtitled films can improve student's oral proficiency" (228). She calls for further research so that final conclusions can be reached.

A further asset of this book is the CD-ROM that supplements it, which includes some assorted audiovisual material (such as exercises and film clips or even a subtitling software program for anyone with an interest in AVT to use). This CD-ROM gives some great added value to the book, and these two hard copy media team up to epitomize the way in which AVT research should probably be presented; that is, as a "multimedia project" (10). However, out of the fifteen contributions, only three include audiovisual material on this CD-ROM. This is of course better than nothing, but the already high value of this hardware would even be higher should it contain material from more contributors and AVT modes.

It is true that the chapters in this book cover a wide range of AVT modes. Still, a slight imbalance can be detected. If we except Zabalbeascoa's contribution (mostly centred on the AVT text itself), Cattrysse and Gambier's work (focused on screenwriting and translation), and Toda's chapter (which covers dubbing, subtitling, voice-over, and translation of web pages), out of the twelve contributions left, seven deal with subtitling related issues, while (for example) only one addresses dubbing (which, on the other hand, is clearly symptomatic of the current—and not necessarily fair—trend in AVT research).

On the whole, *The Didactics of Audiovisual Translation* is a highly recommendable and practical book that successfully fills a gap by tackling issues that need some serious and focused attention. It is about time that publications on AVT quit being so scattered, and this must-read book shows us the way to do it.

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