

**Díaz Cintas, Jorge (ed.) (2009) *New Trends in Audiovisual Translation*. Bristol/Buffalo/Toronto: Multilingual Matters. 270pp. £64.95. ISBN: 978-1-84769-154-5**

**B**roadly based on papers presented in the conference *In So Many Words: Language Transfer on Screen* (London 2004), the latest collection edited by Jorge Díaz-Cintas impresses by its variety and scope. It includes sixteen studies on a large array of topics, such as cultural transfer, representation of identity, and fluency in AVT. The contributors, some of them well-known scholars in the wider area of translation studies, focus mainly on subtitling and dubbing of mainstream films and TV series from and into English. However, less dominant genres (e.g. documentary) and languages (e.g. Greek, Hungarian, as well as Quebec French and Italian dialects) are also represented.

The editor's introduction is essentially a celebratory note on the success of Audiovisual Translation Studies in the academia. Díaz Cintas writes confidently on "the vast potential" of AVT as an inherently heterogeneous discipline, suggesting that the diversity of approaches in this volume is a case in point. Indeed, while contributions are neatly grouped into three thematic sections, "Crossing Cultural Borders," "Juggling with Humour" and "Dealing with Linguistic Variation," other, less obvious threads tie these papers between them, pointing to additional directions. Such threads include, for instance, the complementarity between image and text as separate codes of signification (Pettit, Hurtado and Azaola, Matamala, Sanderson); the tension between the oral and the written modes (Pavesi, Perego); and the way translation choices are affected by relations of cultural hegemony when domestic films are translated for viewing abroad (Gottlieb, Gartzonika and Şerban).

Original and informative research is presented in all papers, even as some topics, such as humour in AVT, were more innovative per se in 2004 than they were in 2009. Some examples of extensive and thorough work merit especial attention. Such is the case of Maria Pavesi's essay which compares a number of linguistic features of Italian dubbing with relevant norms of spontaneous spoken Italian. Pavesi's research reveals that certain features, e.g. marked word orders, are systematically privileged by Italian translators in their effort to produce an effect of orality and authenticity. This type of phenomenological approach does not rely for its validity on the quality of examined translations. It allows for the study of specific linguistic behaviours, in this case the language of dubbing, without resorting to contentious categories, such as equivalence and loss in translation.

In fact many of the studies in this collection consider loss not as a failure on the part of the translator but as a result of the negotiation between the constraints of a particular AVT mode and the specific agenda of the

examined translation. Research then is directed towards identifying this agenda and the ways it was pursued. This is the case of two of the most remarkable papers in the volume.

The first is von Flotow's essay on the politics of dubbing in francophone Canada. Von Flotow explores the controversy (she writes: the 'emotion and ire') surrounding "*le synchronien*," that is, the "normative" and "limited" version of French used in dubbing in Quebec. The author stresses the sociocultural agenda behind the Quebec translators' claim that their dubbing reflects the preferences of the Canadian audience. According to von Flotow, the real purpose of Quebec dubbing is to silence the American English of most dubbed films and to prevent the Franco-French dubbing of the same films from being heard in Canada. She then compares the Franco-French and the Quebec versions of the film *Chicago*, and finds that the former is less prosaic and "correct," and more appropriate to the tone of the film. Overall, von Flotow's paper points to the need for more research into the politics of audiovisual translation and the assumptions by governments and translators alike as to what is good for the audience.

The politics of AVT is equally the topic of a second contribution of note, Abele Longo's "Subtitling the Italian South." Here, the discussion is about using AVT to second the agendas of the films themselves. In the case studies discussed by Longo, subtitling is employed to enhance the visibility of southern Italian linguistic minorities. Longo focuses on two films using predominantly southern Italian dialects and subtitled into standard Italian for the benefit of the average Italian viewer. The author looks closely in these intralingual subtitles and suggests that they aim not to substitute for the dialectal Italian, but to help the Italian viewer understand it. Through literal and foreignising translation, subtitles become visible and elicit the active involvement of the viewers in understanding the spoken language of the film.

Many contributors in this substantial volume acknowledge that their conclusions are based on relatively small corpora and are therefore open to further scrutiny. This brings to mind Díaz Cintas's earlier call for "[carrying] out work, in research groups, that analyses sufficiently broad corpora and allows the derivation of substantial conclusions" (2004: 63). While such projects are still scarce, the present volume serves both to record current trends in Audiovisual Translation and to indicate future avenues of large-scale research.

## Reference

- Díaz Cintas, Jorge (2004). "Subtitling: the Long Journey to Academic Acknowledgement." *JoSTrans, The Journal of Specialised Translation* 1, 50-68. Online at [http://www.jostrans.org/issue01/art\\_diaz\\_cintas.php](http://www.jostrans.org/issue01/art_diaz_cintas.php) (consulted 27.11.2009)

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