José Javier Ávila-Cabrera (2023). *The Challenge of Subtitling Offensive and Taboo Language into Spanish. A Theoretical and Practical Guide*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters, pp. 156, 269.90 €. ISBN: 978-1-80041-486-0.

T he field of audiovisual translation has experienced a real explosion in recent decades and has become one of the specialised branches of the discipline with the greatest expansion in the market. The widespread use of streaming platforms and massive access to digital content by consumers has revolutionised translation practices and has given rise to new needs and challenges for which answers must be found. Translation Studies, in an effort to remain at the forefront of this evolution, analyse new avenues and unexplored aspects in order to provide a solid basis informed by theory that will serve, at the same time, as an aid in the practice of the translator's profession.

The Challenge of Subtitling Offensive and Taboo Language into Spanish. A Theoretical and Practical Guide by José Javier Ávila Cabrera offers just such an approach that aptly combines theory and practice on a topic that has not received sufficient attention until now, despite its significance. This volume analyses in detail the use of offensive and taboo language in audiovisual products, which poses new translation dilemmas that must be specifically addressed due to their relevance for the representation of cultures and the transmission of identities.

After a brief introduction presenting the different parts of the book, the second chapter offers a comprehensive view of the different types of subtitling and the most common conventions in the industry, including those related to punctuation and orthotypography. This theoretical review draws on the contributions on the technical constraints of subtitles presented in the seminal works by Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007, 2021). The detailed explanation of the technical parameters that the author provides in this chapter serves as a fundamental introductory manual for the uninitiated in subtitling tasks. At the same time, it integrates the most recent theoretical and professional perspectives on this field. This makes this section a reference guide especially useful for those who teach subtitling in specialised courses and, in general, for professionals who must respond to the current needs of the market. The chapter then turns to questions related to the relevance of the institution of patronage and to ideological manipulation and censorship. The approach to the latter two issues in relation to subtitling is particularly innovative vis-à-vis the state of the art in AVT, since traditionally studies in this field have mainly focused on dubbing as a translation modality that is subject to these types of manipulation. For this purpose, Ávila Cabrera recovers for the field of subtitling concepts in the bases of the 'cultural turn' that Lefevere (1992) developed within Translation Studies to observe how the influence of certain groups or sectors filters into this rewriting modality, thus conditioning the result and the translation solutions with which the original content will be

(re)presented for the target audience. With regard to censorship, and although the volume deals only with the contexts of the US, the UK and Spain, the insights into this phenomenon can easily be extrapolated to shed light on other environments and serve as a starting point for future studies in a line of research in which there are still many avenues to be explored. The elements in the original contents on which this volume focuses are particularly susceptible to alteration in the target versions, given the "erotic, vulgar or inappropriate [character of] expressions or references" (p. 28) that have to be translated. The chronological journey that the work makes through different periods, especially those of greatest censorship in the US, UK and Spain, is proof of this. The panoramic overview of censorship in these three countries with which the chapter concludes helps to contextualise the causes of censorship, while exposing the areas and topics in which it was and potentially may be most harshly applied to audiovisual works. In this sense, at the same time, this diachronic review shows the challenges remaining today in the professional practice of subtitling when dealing with these issues.

The third chapter focuses on offensive and taboo language as a pervading ingredient in audiovisual texts that needs to be addressed from different perspectives whenever translation is required. It starts with a historical review and by defining terminological concepts and then presents a clear and practical taxonomy for classifying phenomena related to this type of language and the different ways in which it may appear in a text. In line with the approach of the previous chapter, the subsections that make up this section turn this work into a reference guide for the teaching practice of offensive and taboo language recognition in the subtitling classroom. The first part lays the groundwork for a subsequent, more detailed analysis of the treatment of this type of language from a cultural approach which, at the same time, takes into account the specific needs of audiovisual translation. The section on research on offensive language and taboo areas and their application to subtitling is one of the main strengths of the book which makes it especially appealing for researchers in this field, as it offers a concise but thorough review of the studies carried out in the last decades and includes some of the most recent contributions in this line.

The model for the analysis of offensive or taboo language presented in Chapter 4 is particularly insightful, since it combines strategies and techniques that are applied, not only to subtitling and AVT as specific modalities, but to the translation of offensive and taboo language in this type of texts. For that purpose, the chapter draws on the classical methodologies described by Molina and Hurtado Albir (2002) and Díaz Cintas and Remael (2021) and combines them with the author's own typology of techniques from previous research (Ávila-Cabrera 2020). In this regard, AVT professionals will find in this book a comprehensive list of the different types of tools with which to face these translation-related problems in the field of subtitling, along with a clear and brief presentation that is both practical and illustrative. Through the numerous examples that

complement the analysis of the translation options presented in the chapter, it is possible to glimpse existing alternatives for the rewriting of taboo and offensive language. At the same time, the cases that accompany the translation techniques and strategies make it possible for the reader to appreciate the impact of the target text on its potential audience through enlightening comparisons that focus, departing from elements in the micro-linguistic level, on the cultural asymmetries that emerge when dealing with socially-sensitive issues such as sexuality or religion, and racial, ethnic or gender identities. The author also contributes his own set of guidelines regarding research design for the descriptive analysis of offensive and taboo terms in AVT. This proposal for descriptive analysis, based on a five-point approach ('purposes,' 'conceptual framework,' 'research questions,' 'methods' and 'sampling procedures'), offers an immediately applicable format of great use to researchers in the field of AVT. Furthermore, it adds to the different theoretical models already used in the audiovisual area, stressing the current emphasis on further developing descriptive studies of AVT, a field that has multiplied its research results in recent years.

The combined theoretical and practical approach of this volume will appeal to a wide range of potential readers. Undergraduates will find in its pages a solid and well-founded presentation of the basics of subtitling and translating offensive and taboo language. Researchers, on the other hand, will find in this book a comprehensive review of the state of the art in this topic, of its application to AVT and, more specifically, to subtitling as a translation modality where it has not received extensive attention and where new avenues of research may offer interesting results. As a resource for AVT professionals, this volume is a handy tool that can assist subtitlers in solving very frequent problems in their daily work. Indeed, it sheds light on an aspect of translation practice that, due to its very nature, is often overlooked in the training of specialists. Finally, and in relation to the formative potential of this text, it should be noted that one of the most interesting merits of this volume lies in the fact that the three final chapters include, as an annex, a series of practical exercises for which an answer key is provided at the end of the book. As said above, this resource will help readers who are beginning or expanding their training in the field of AVT to fix the concepts that are explained throughout the pages and to consolidate their knowledge. Additionally, it can also be very useful for professionals in this field and, especially, for subtitling trainers, who can take advantage from a valuable collection of examples focused on offensive and taboo language with which to guide others through their educational process.

References

- **Ávila-Cabrera, José Javier** (2020). "Profanity and Blasphemy in the subtitling of English into European Spanish: Four case studies based on a selection of Tarantino's films". *Quaderns, Revista de Traducció* 27, 125-141. DOI:10.5565/rev/quaderns.11

- **Díaz Cintas, Jorge and Aline Remael** (2007). *Audiovisual translation: Subtitling*. Manchester: St Jerome.

- **Díaz Cintas, Jorge and Aline Remael** (2021). *Subtitling: Concepts and Practices*. New York: Routledge.

- **Lefevere, André** (1992). *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame.* London: Routledge.

- **Molina, Lucía and Amparo Hurtado Albir** (2002). "Translation techniques revisited: A dynamic and functionalist approach". *Meta* 47(4), 498-512. DOI:10.7202/008033ar.

J. David González-Iglesias González
Complutense University of Madrid
E-mail: juandgon@ucm.es