JoSTrans
The Journal of Specialised Translation

www.jostrans.org · ISSN: 1740-367X

Weisshaupt, N. (2017). The challenge of dubbing bird names: shifts of meaning and strategies used in the German version of The Big Year. *The Journal of Specialised Translation, 28*, 189-209.
https://doi.org/10.26034/cm.jostrans.2017.238

This article is publish under a *Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International* (CC BY):
https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0

© Nadja Weisshaupt, 2017

The challenge of dubbing bird names: shifts of meaning and translation strategies used in the German version of *The Big Year* (2011)

Nadja Weisshaupt, University of the Basque Country, Spain

ABSTRACT

Despite the growth of the English-speaking audience, audiovisual translation is still widespread and appreciated by a considerable proportion of media users, who watch audiovisual products in their native tongue. These products are translated using different transfer modes, such as subtitling, dubbing or voice-over.

This study focuses on the quality of one of these modes: dubbing, which is measured considering appropriate register, cultural background, as well as the synchronisation between the translating voice and the speaking actor/actress or the on-screen activities. In order to evaluate the dubbing strategies used for translating English bird names in the German dubbed version of the film *The Big Year*, qualitative features from scientific and audiovisual translation theory have been applied in consideration of established standard scientific terminology and human factors in the birding community. Constraints and challenges arising and their effects on the quality of dubbing are discussed. Various shifts in meaning were identified and classified as to their impact on the general understanding of the scenes. The majority of the shifts were of minor importance, but there were some severe distortions in key scenes, which caused obvious though avoidable incoherence and consequently affected the overall quality of the dubbing.

The present study identified both successful and unsuccessful dubbing strategies. It concludes that a systematic adherence to established standard ornithology terminology is not always pursued and that, although some deviations are occasionally suitable due to dubbing constraints, this lack of consistency is overall detrimental to the factual and scientific content of the film.

KEYWORDS

Dubbing, ornithology, synchronisation, shifts, scientific translation, audiovisual translation.

1. Introduction

Despite an increasing use of English in today's digital world, English-language audiovisual products are still enjoyed by a considerable proportion of media users in their native tongue. These products are translated using different transfer modes, such as subtitling, dubbing or voice-over (Hernandez and Mendiluce Cabrera 2005). Overall, wildlife programmes tend to be translated by way of voice-over but long feature films are dubbed on the whole. This study focuses on the latter. Its aim is to explore the dubbing strategies used for translating English bird names in the German dubbed version of the film *The Big Year.* The study involves an interdisciplinary approach integrating both science, in particular ornithology, and Translation Studies, which can take into account the best strategies for referring to the world of birds and potentially promote its visibility among a wide audience.

1.1 Particularities of dubbing

Dubbing consists of a complex transfer process involving various steps, whose order may vary to a certain extent depending on local circumstances and preferences. However, generally, a dubbing translation is driven by the following features (Martinez 2004): (1) a decision concerning which parts should be translated or left in their original language (e.g. songs, screen inserts); (2) the translation of the film script by a translator, who uses the film itself and/or the written script, and re-writing of this initial translation by the translator or, more frequently, by a dialogue writer; (3) the synchronisation of the translated dialogue to match the actors' lip movements and on-screen actions, excluding written text; (4) the actual dubbing sessions in which actors implement the translated and adapted script.

Linguistic challenges arise during the translation and synchronisation steps. The translator needs to find an appropriate register, and take into account the cultural background and find accurate equivalents for the linguistic features of the original. In synchronisation, the challenge consists of adapting the translation for the speaking actor (Chaves 2000) and his or her activity (Fodor 1976). Chaume (2004:43) distinguishes between three main types of synchronisation: (1) phonetic synchronisation, which refers to the lip movements of the actors; (2) kinetic synchronisation, which refers to body movements; and (3) dubbing isochrony, which refers to the synchrony between spoken text and pauses. A fourth type is provided by Fodor (1976): content synchrony, which is the coherence of dubbing with the on-screen action. In the present case, most English bird names, in particular on species level, are so different from German ones that every attempt to attain phonetic synchronisation or isochrony would produce severe distortion of meaning (see section Scientific translation and dubbing). Therefore in this study, in which meaning coherence is argued to be more important than dubbing norms, these two norms were considered as inapplicable for the bird names in this film.

So, even though the audience of the target language (TL) is unaware of the exact content of the source language (SL) and thus concedes more freedom to the translator when dealing with translational challenges (Ascheid 1997, Sanchez 2004), a dubbed film must adopt a certain framework in terms of oral and visual information to avoid distortion of meaning.

Through inaccurate translation, shifts of meaning and distortion can occur, i.e. spoken text does not coincide with actions, so the audience will feel distracted by these inaccuracies and will not be able to enjoy the film. However, some scholars argue that shifts cannot be avoided as linguistic

aspects such as humour, fixed expressions, cultural items, etc. challenge the translation process (Nida and Taber 1969). In the media (e.g. newspapers) there are numerous examples of inaccurate use of bird names and consequent shifts of meaning. Hence, further challenges might be found when dubbing a film in contrast to unilingual news coverage.
In the context of dubbed films, as Chaume (2004: 36) has emphasised, the priority is given to naturalness in the target language version. This implies synchronisation at several levels such as phonetic or lip synchrony, kinetic or body synchrony and isochrony or synchrony between utterances and pauses (Chaume 2004: 43). Chaume outlines how in dubbing, where the final decisions about the target scripts are made by the dialogue writer and the dubbing director, not by a translator who has a knowledge of both source and target languages, the tendency is to go for perfect phonetic synchronisation and a seamlessly invisible translation (ibid.: 36), to the expense of accuracy at times. Overall the quality of the synchronisation determines in the end if a film is good. Generally, the synchronisation goal is achieved when the dubbing becomes invisible and the dialogue does not sound like a translation (Kahane 1990-1991, Chaume 2004:36). Transferring this to bird names would mean to strictly adhere to the accuracy of the bird names and thus to naturalness in the target language, even though general dubbing norms would be deprioritised.

1.2 Scientific translation and dubbing

Successful language transfer has played and plays a vital role in the dissemination of scientific findings (Montgomery 2000), maybe even more so in today's globalised world. Scientific translation, similar to technical translation, has been generally linked with a predominantly instrumental and informative function, leaving little room for creativity and deviation from the SL by the translator (Al-Hassnawi 2009, Franco Aixelá 2004). The requirements for scientific translations are considered high because of the need for a solid background in the specific scientific area (Jumpelt 1961: 35). Therefore, in a scientific or academic environment scientific translations are often carried out by the scientists themselves. Terminology not following established conventions and standardised vocabulary can result in flaws and distortions that are noticed instantly by the respective scientific community. Such texts are then perceived as unprofessional and inadequate for the particular area because of the loss of usefulness or functionality. Besides other elements, functionality ('skopos' as defined by Reiss and Vermeer 1984) of a translation has been proposed as an evaluative criterion to assess translation quality. In scientific publications and other communications, the so-called Scientific English does not necessarily require an eloquently formulated text, but rather clearly and unequivocally formulated information respecting correct terminology (Day and Sakaduski 2011: 2). Given this strong instrumental and informative focus of scientific language use and derived products such

as translation or dubbing, it could be argued that functionality of a text is superior to other translation and dubbing theory.

As stated previously, the theoretical pillars in dubbing are the four types of synchronisation. The scientific requirements for accurate terminology within narrow boundaries potentially represent a strong competitor to synchronisation in dubbing. Thus content with low potential for phonetic synchronisation will expose the translator to the challenge of either using a scientifically inappropriate term with good phonetic synchronisation, or a genuinely scientific term with no/low phonetic synchronisation. The increased direct use of English terminology in the modern global scientific community and beyond, along with the tendency to adapt foreign words (e.g. 'to bird' is germanised to *birden* instead of *Vögel beobachten* ['to watch birds']), might appear favourable for synchronisation. However, *genuinely* translated terminology (i.e. *Vögel beobachten* instead of *birden*) might only exhibit low cross-linguistic similarity, if any. Considering bird names, in Europe a 'blackbird' is a *Amsel*, a 'robin' is a *Rotkehlchen* and a 'chaffinch' is a *Buchfink* and so on. Phonetic synchrony is slightly more likely in more comprehensive denominations embracing groups of bird species (e.g. bird families, see next section for ornithological terminology), e.g. a 'swan' is a *Schwan* or a 'finch' is (often) a *Fink*. Obviously, similarities are more likely to be found in closely related languages (e.g. English 'nest' vs. German *Nest)* and decreasingly among the wealth of terms originating from times before the upsurge of the English language for international scientific communication and from local usage by non-scientific communities.

1.3 Nomenclature in ornithology

Across all fields of biology, species are systematically divided into several hierarchical groups of organisms (taxa) according to their degree of kinship. To take an example from ornithology, for the House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), this classification would be from most inclusive to least inclusive: animals (kingdom), vertebrates (phylum), birds (class), passerines (order), sparrow (family), Passer (genus), and House sparrow *Passer domesticus* (species). Out in nature, the only relevant level is the species level, because that's the scale at which animals typically reproduce and produce fertile offspring. The modern system of scientific names is based on Carl Linnaeus' *Systema Naturae* (1735-1768) which was created to facilitate the identification of species worldwide. It follows a binomial nomenclature based on Latin and Greek which typically consists of the generic and species names (e.g. *Passer domesticus* for House sparrow). The use of scientific names is more common in an academic environment and in written form or for international communication in place of the English names. There have also been increasing efforts to standardise species names in modern languages, i.e. the common names, which are more typically used by non-scientific communities such as amateur ornithologists. For official common names in

English, a guideline is provided by the International Ornithologists' Union (IOU) whose aim is "to facilitate worldwide communication in ornithology and conservation based on up-to-date taxonomy of world birds and recommended English names that follow explicit guidelines for spelling and construction (World Bird Names).

In other languages, country-specific species lists and specialised literature (such as field guides like Svensson et al. 2011) usually indicate the officially accepted names. Species lists are, for example, published by competent committees, such as the *Schweizerische Avifaunistische Kommission* in Switzerland (see Swiss Ornithological Institute 2016) or the *Deutsche Ornithologen-Gesellschaft* in Germany (see Barthel and Helbig 2005). To find official German translations for the American species, multi-lingual specialised online databases like *Avibase* can be consulted, which is supported by BirdLife International (a global partnership of conservation organisations that strives to conserve birds, their habitats and global biodiversity). In the present study, these specialised references are consulted to evaluate whether or not a translation is accurate. However, it is important to bear in mind that this reference system is theory, and the practice in the field, i.e. everyday birdwatching, might slightly differ. For example the official English name of the swallow species *Hirundo rustica* is *Barn swallow*, colloquially referred to as *swallow* because on the English-speaking territory in Europe this is simply the only swallow species present, unless you see a vagrant or you are in southern Europe where the Red-rumped swallow (*Hirundo daurica*) occurs and clarification would be needed (other European swallow species are referred to as *martins*). Furthermore, there are also many colloquial abbreviations in use for compound species names, not only in English. These abbreviations are typically used among experienced or keen birders rather than beginners, so that for instance only the first part of the name would be pronounced (e.g. *Cetti's* instead of *Cetti's Warbler*). By contrast, in ambiguous situations, the ornithologists would use the appropriate (full) name to avoid confusion. For example there are several species names with the component *marsh*: marsh harrier, marsh tit, marsh warbler. So, if one only said, "I saw a marsh," the species would not be clear. In any case, birdwatchers, in particular from a certain level of expertise, are well aware of the official names of the birds in their country and on their continent or even beyond and would not use off-standard terminology. However, importantly, this tendency to use abbreviations may not be interpreted as hypernymy by translators, even though the resulting names might be similar. In the example of the Barn swallow, *swallow* could be both hypernymy with a switch to the family level and colloquial for *Barn swallow*. Conversely, the German equivalent *Schwalbe* can refer to any of the five European species, violating the clarity of the established nomenclature.

1. 4 Typology of the ornithologists' community

The ornithological community is very diverse, ranging from actual scientists (ornithologists) to more or less knowledgeable amateur birdwatchers to passionate (or fanatic) birders. There are no clear definitions, and boundaries between the different types of people interested in birds are blurred. Bill Oddie (2011), not too seriously, made an attempt to classify different types of people according to their level of knowledge and behaviour or eagerness in the field: *ornithologists* (bird scientists with a university degree in biology), *birdwatchers* (all kinds of people with some expertise in birds), *birders* (the elite which is "...seriously involved in studying, identifying and collecting birds") and *twitchers* (people obsessed with ticking new rare species for their species list, often undertaking long journeys to see them without necessarily discovering any rarity on their own). For this study, only the class of the *birders* is relevant, being the keenest and most knowledgeable of all actively searching and watching types and corresponding to the three leading characters in the film. These people have typically a high level of identification skills both acoustically and visually and dedicate a considerable amount of time to watching birds. An additional characteristic of birders can be a tendency to competitiveness which manifests itself in birdwatching competitions, i.e. bird races, aimed at seeing as many species as possible in a specified amount of time and space. These competitions can be taken very seriously by some people and accordingly the degree of rigor rises, i.e. the level of identification skills is very high and no ambiguous or inaccurate species names would be used. Therefore, one would not expect to hear inaccurate species names used by such people.

In dubbed audiovisual products with a scientific background, dubbing principles would be expected to be implemented as far as possible. However, adherence to the official ornithological terminology would be anticipated to weigh heavier than translation and dubbing theory (i.e. synchronisation), based on the standards of nomenclature and the associated high knowledge level of the protagonists. Furthermore, given the specialised topic, a potential bias towards a *trained* audience, who would expect the respective standard terminology to be employed in a good-quality movie, seems likely. If these standards are not met, translation and dubbing derived thereof would not become invisible, i.e. the ultimate goal of dubbing as defined by Kahane (1990-1991) is not achieved, and thus product quality is negatively affected.

In order to test the hypothesised superiority of scientific standards over translation and dubbing theory, this study scrutinises the movie *The Big Year*, as it is believed to be a good model for studying the constraints and challenges of dubbing and their effects because of its highly specific content. This film is a comedy based on the book *The Big Year: A Tale of Man, Nature and Fowl Obsession* written by Mark Obmascik. The film tells

the story of the three fictitious US bird enthusiasts (*birders*), Kenny Bostick, Brad Harris and Stu Preissler, entering a competition called *The Big Year*. This competition involves observing as many bird species as possible in North America within one year. During the film many names of American and partially European bird species are mentioned. Many of the bird species names in the film are translated accurately, however, some are inaccurate as per the standards of the IOU and other specialised entities.

2. Methodology

At the time of collecting data and editing the manuscript, there was no similar study on dubbing zoological content available to the best of the author's knowledge, so a methodology was set up without any reference studies. Of the two existing versions of the film, the extended cut and the theatrical version, the latter was used for the analysis of both the English and the German version. Firstly, all bird names mentioned in the film were identified and marked with a time stamp both for the English and German versions of the film. Then, the bird names were compared and their German translations were verified by comparing them with the IOU standards, as well as with the leading ornithological field guide for European birds *Collins Bird Guide* and its German equivalent *Der neue Kosmos-Vogelführer* (Svensson et al. 2011). Next, the translations deviating from these standard references (e.g. non-existent species name, shift in taxonomic level etc.) were identified and their impact on a single scene or even the entire film was analysed in connection with the translation theories about shifts of meaning and dubbing. Accordingly, the translations were categorised in five groups based on the similarity of the issues - a finer scale did not seem reasonable given the low number of incidences in class 2-4:

1) *accurate*: they coincided with the official names
2) *minor errors and inconsistencies*: the bird name was not translated consistently or accurately down to species level but the translation would not lead to major distortions of meaning or confusions as to which bird was meant, or that a scene would not make sense, because the term used would still indicate the accurate bird family or genus.
3) *major error*: the name would not make sense in German, so that confusion or distortion of meaning arose from it
4) *abbreviation*: abbreviations of official bird names
5) *other* for other issues.

Furthermore, wherever applicable, alternative strategies to potentially avoid the shifts of meaning were suggested. By adopting these strategies in the respective dialogue, dubbing could have been taken closer to its ultimate goal of invisibility to the viewer.

3. Results and discussion

The results are presented according to the five categories listed in the previous section. Overall 63 bird species and 88 bird families were mentioned in the film (Table 1, see appendix).

1) Accurate translations (category 1). 41 out of 63 bird species and 6 out of 88 bird family names fall in this category. This represents the highest proportion of the translated bird species and all translated bird families. It includes a variety of species and families, such as waterbirds, raptors, woodpeckers or songbirds occurring both in dialogue and narration (Table 2, see appendix). There were no obvious characteristics in terminology, or in the on-screen action which could have favoured accurate translation.

2) Minor errors (category 2) occurred in three species (5%) (Table 3, see appendix). The first two cases, *Raven* and *Goldfinch*, represent a minor shift at taxonomic level. First the German term *Rabe* is a generic name, but not a species name, whereas the English *Raven* denotes a particular species, i.e. the *Common Raven* (*Corvus corax*) (*common* may be omitted), which would be *Kolkrabe* in German. A bird only identified at generic level could not be counted in a bird race because these competitions are based on species level and thus the relevant systematic level is the species level. In a later scene on Attu Island, *Raven* is however correctly translated down to species level as *Kolkrabe*. Second, *Goldfinch* was translated as *Goldfink* instead of *Goldzeisig*. A German *Zeisig* is part of the family of the finches and *finch* in German often denominates a species of *Fink*. So in both examples, the German term was not accurate at taxonomic level, but it would allow the viewer to associate the bird image in their head with the image on the screen.

The third case concerns the *American Golden Plover*. For this species there are four German names, the one most commonly used in German being *Amerikanischer Goldregenpfeife*r. It was the official name until 2011 when it changed to *Prärie-Goldregenpfeifer*. However, this change probably happened after the release of the dubbed film version. The German version uses *Amerikanischer Goldregenpfeife*r on one occasion, which is scrutinised below in category 3, and another name, *Wanderregenpfeifer*, in a later scene, whereas in English there is only one name used for this species. In this later scene a photo is even shown where you can see the bird. So the audience might wonder what new plover species this might be. Both scenes deal with normal dialogue. There is no joke or any other obvious trigger for applying divergent translation strategies. The term *Amerikanischer Goldregenpfeife*r would even be quite close to the English *American Golden Plover* and would promote phonetic synchrony. The inconsistency gives the impression that the protagonists are talking about different species, especially as people are used to one particular bird name, i.e. the most common one, which still is *Amerikanischer Goldregenpfeifer*. So it has a slightly confusing

effect, though both names are accurate and guide the viewers' minds to an appropriate image.

3) Major errors (category 3) occurred with six species (5%) (Table 4, see appendix) whose names were either invented or allocated erroneously to a certain species. The first species name concerns the *Great Grey Owl*, which is a fixed term for the owl species *Strix nebulosa*. The term occurs twice, first at 00:06:08 (English) and 00:05:53 (German) and second at 01:17:28 (English) and 01:13:17 (German). The first time the name is literally translated as *Grosse Graueule*, whereas the second time the accurate German name *Bartkauz* (literally: 'Bearded Owl') is used. The first time the term is used as a password, which the protagonist Bostick speaks into the phone. The German term *Grosse Graueule* does not exist, though, and people could not derive anything meaningful from it. However, it could be argued that the term *Bartkauz* is further away in terms of phonetic synchronisation than *Grosse Graueule* which could justify the choice. However, there is no such bird in German. The official standard name weighs heavier than phonetic synchronisation and must be respected for the sake of clarity. In addition, using a non-existent bird name reduces the credibility of the knowledgeable birder Bostick.

The second species name *Pink-footed Goose* is translated literally and thus inaccurately as 'Pinkfußgans' throughout the entire film, whereas the accurate German term would be 'Kurzschnabelgans', literally translated 'Short-billed Goose'. Overall it is mentioned in six scenes, one of which was a humorous scene:

English (01:01:42-01:02:03)/*German* (00:59:04-00:59:26)

Darren: So, Allie tells me you guys are going to look for a - what is it - a **pink goose**?
*Allie hat mir gesagt, ihr seid auf der Suche nach einer - wie hast dus genannt - **pinken Gans**?*

Allie: No, it's a...
Nein, es ist keine...

Brad: No, not a **pink goose**. No such thing as a pink goose. It's a **Pink-footed Goose**. So, if I came to see a **pink goose**, then I guess this whole trip would have been a big waste of time, wouldn't it? **Pink Goose**. Maybe there's a purple swan out there, too. Let's go.
*Nein, keine **pinke Gans**. Es gibt keine **pinke Gans**. Es ist eine **Pinkfußgans**. Ja. Wenn ich hier wäre, um ne **pinke Gans** zu sehen, wäre meine Reise wohl völlig umsonst gewesen, nicht? **Pinke Gans**. Vielleicht finde ich da draussen auch noch einen rosa Schwan, wer weiss. Fahren wir.*

The strategy of using the literal translation does conserve the joke. The German term *Short-billed Goose* would not work with the joke based on

the colour pink. However, the bird is clearly shown in a later scene and its normal winter distribution range (Scotland) is mentioned. So the spectator would not assume any kind of unknown exotic species behind the term *Pinkfußgans* and it is not credible that top birders such as Brad and Allie would use a wrong bird name. Both the joke and the accurate bird name could have been conserved, though, by replacing Brad's statement

"Nein, keine pinke Gans. Es gibt keine pinke Gans. Es ist eine Pinkfußgans."

for example by

"Nein, keine pinke Gans. Eine Kurzschnabelgans mit pinken Füssen."
(literally: 'No, not a pink goose. A Short-billed Goose with pink feet').

The original English text contains 18 syllables, the dubbed version 19 and the newly proposed version 17. Thus the suggested version would not be noticeably shorter and would not contradict the requirements of isochrony. But again, isochrony, just like phonetic synchrony, would not apply as general rule in regard to translations of bird names as only very few official German bird names match the lip movements of English names and vice versa. Every attempt to achieve isochrony or phonetic synchrony would lead to severe violations of the standard terminology. According to Attardo (2002), translations of puns always differ from the ST because of different relations, meanings and values in the SL and TL. Consequently the use of *Short-billed Goose* would be acceptable. So the strategy of using the literal translation for the *Pink-footed Goose* adds only distraction throughout the entire film, in the other occurrences as well as embedded in the joke.

The third case encompasses a scene on Attu Island, the westernmost island of the Aleutian Islands of Alaska, where the birders travel to spot rare birds. One day a small songbird, a Rustic Bunting *(Emberiza rustica*), usually breeding in north-eastern Scandinavia and Asia, is recorded and announced via loudspeaker:

English: (47:00-49.05) / *German (45:05-47:05)*

Allie:	I've only been here a week and my life list is already at 578. *Ich bin erst eine Woche hier und habe schon 578 auf meiner Liste.*
Birder:	Serious? *Im Ernst?*
Allie:	Wanna see? Yes. *Ja. Wollen Sie mal sehen?*
Birder:	I'd love to. *Ja, sehr gerne.*
Allie:	That is the ***American***...

*Das ist der **Amerikanische**...*

Birder: So beautiful.
Sieht wunderschön aus.

Allie: Yes... ***Golden Plover***.
*Ja... **Goldregenpfeifer**.*

Birder: You guys have the same eyes.
Ihr habt die gleichen Augen.

Gladys: ***Rustic Bunting*.**
***Waldammer**.*

Brad: Excuse me!
Ach, Verzeihung!

Gladys: Massacre Valley. ***Rustic Bunting*.**
*Im Massacre Valley - **Goldregenpfeifer**. Macht euch bereit.*

Birder: Massacre Valley, come on!
Massacre Valley wir kommen!

Birder: Come on!
Beeil dich!
....

Brad: Kenny, ***Rustic Bunting*.**
*Kenny, ein **Goldregenpfeifer.***

Kenny: Really? I'll catch up to you.
Tatsächlich? Ich komme später nach.

Birder: Come back, come back, you guys, the ***bunting*** is at Casco Cove!
*Kehrt um, kehrt um, der **Goldregenpfeifer** ist zurückgeflogen zum Casco Cove!*

Birder: The other way, the ***Rustic Bunting*** is up there!
*Macht rechts umkehrt, der **Goldregenpfeifer** ist da drüben!*

Birder: The ***bunting*** has gone up the hill! Turn around, turn around!
*Der **Goldregenpfeifer** ist auf dem Hügel! Kehrt um! Macht kehrt!*

Birder: The ***bunting*** flew down the hill! Come back!
*Der **Regenpfeifer** ist da runter geflogen! Wieder zurück!*

Birder: What?
Was?

Birder: Come back, no, the ***bunting*** flew down the hill!
*Kehrt um, der **Regenpfeifer** ist nicht mehr auf dem Hügel!*

Speaker: Gladys! We finally found the ***bunting***. It is at Murder Point.
*Gladys, sie haben den **Goldregenpfeifer** jetzt entdeckt! Er ist am Murder Point.*
...

Birder: I found a ***thrush*** back here.
*Ein **Goldregenpfeifer.***

Birder: There it is!
*Da! Ich sehe **ihn**!*

Birder: Where?
Wo?

Bostick: Ah, hey everybody?

Ah, wie gehts, Freunde?

The accurate German term for *Rustic Bunting* is 'Waldammer'. Shortly after first naming the *Rustic Bunting* accurately *Waldammer,* it is addressed as *Goldregenpfeifer* (*Golden Plover*) throughout the whole sequence. The *American Golden Plover* is a long-legged wader about three times as large as the bunting and does not have much in common with it. After a long search, the birders are eventually standing in a field looking for the bunting or plover, respectively. In the English version someone announces the observation of a thrush, another small songbird, and thereafter a woman calls out the *Rustic Bunting*. In contrast, in the German version the person who announces the thrush in the English version, names the plover instead. There is no reaction to this observation, even though this would be exactly the bird species everybody was so desperately looking for. Then a woman calls out "Ich sehe ihn!" ('*I see him*') which would refer to the sighting of the *Golden Plover*. In the German phrase "I see him" the *him* refers to the German masculine noun for Golden Plover and not the bunting. The German term for bunting would be feminine (i.e. *die* Ammer). So throughout the sequence the German version maintains that people are looking for and eventually at an *American Golden Plover*. However, at the end of the sequence the viewers see four small songbirds, not waders, flying up in front of Bostick who takes pictures of the birds. So this sequence represents content dyschrony as the words do not match the activities on screen and divert the audience's attention. Isochrony or phonetic synchrony could not have been the reason for this choice as *Goldregenpfeifer* is not closer to the English *Rustic Bunting* than *Waldammer* and people announcing the bunting are mostly filmed from a distance, so their lip movement could not be seen.

Basically, the film is classified as a (realistic) comedy, but the presented major distortions cannot be interpreted as part of an intended (German) comical sketch given the mere nature and seriousness of the bird contest setting based on flawless bird identification on species level.

4) In category 4 there were two species names (3%) which were abbreviated in a dialogue in English, i.e. the Flammulated Owl *Psiloscops flammeolus* was referred to as *flammer*, and the Calliope Hummingbird as *Calliope* (Table 5, see appendix). In German, no abbreviation was used in the dialogues for either species, i.e. *Ponderosaeule* and *Sternelfe*, respectively. In the case of the owl, the German version could have been expected to go for a shorter version as well to maintain the colloquial tone and to promote synchronisation. *Ponderosaeule* has 6 syllables, while *flammer* has only 2. However, it remains questionable if the broad German-speaking (also ornithological) audience could have understood any abbreviation for a non-European bird species, e.g. 'Ponderosa' or even shorter, if the term *owl* had not been included. In case of the hummingbird, the German name has already as many syllables as the

English abbreviation and any further shortening, such as *Stern* ('star') would not have been clearly indicative of any species in the scene. So it seems reasonable to replace the abbreviation by the full species name in German for the sake of clarity.

5) Category 5 comprises of two sequences where written screen inserts were not translated at all (Table 6, see appendix). The first scene takes place on Attu Island, in the English version from 00:49:11 to 00:49:53, and in the German version from 00:47:11 to 00:47:49. The written bird names are located in different spots of the film images pointing at the localities where the birds were observed. There are no subtitles, which would provide the German bird names, and so 14 species are presented without translation. The same applies to the end sequence where written text identifies the 82 bird families presented in pictures, in the English version from 01:34:41 to 01:38:32, and in the German version from 01:30:48 to 01:34:30. These two parts are inconsistent with the strategy used in another part of the film. At 01:30:09 in the English and at 01:25:27 in the German version Bostick ticks a Snowy Owl on December 31, whose name is written as text on the lower screen in English and in German as subtitles on top. Subtitling includes additional and/or different constraints than dubbing (e.g. number of characters per line, on-screen time, etc.) (for details see Cintas Díaz Cintas 2013). Spatial and time issues do not seem to be a reasonable cause for the applied strategy. In the Attu scene, the nametags move slowly across the screen and the bird names do not exceed by far the general subtitling limit of 35 characters per line. In the end sequence, the spatial or time limit is not challenged either. So aesthetic or spatial reasons can be ruled out - the German subtitles typically appearing on the lower screen would not have interfered more with the images than the bird names distributed across the screen. At least for the scene on Attu Island the question arises as to why subtitles were not applied. One would expect that a key scene as this one - the island where the birders could increase their numbers of observed species considerably - would be fully translated. So the missing subtitles in the Attu scene leave the audience guessing about the bird species and finally distract them. The translation of the bird names in the end sequence is maybe not so important as some people might not watch the film until the very end. Alternatively the reason could be that there is no tradition of translating credits. This end sequence runs next to the credits after the actual end of the film, so it could have been handled as a part of the credits.

4. Conclusions

The analysis aimed at investigating qualitative aspects of dubbing in a scientific context based on established standard terminology, assuming superior importance for scientific standards over translational or dubbing theory (in particular phonetic synchronisation). The applied methodology

allowed the identification of both successful and unsuccessful dubbing strategies, with unsuccessful cases being linked to deviations from established standards for ornithological terminology. Results suggest a need to sacrifice main dubbing principles (synchronisation) to maintain the credibility of the actions and dialogues and consequently quality, by adhering to scientifically accurate terminology for birds. Given the presumed outstanding expertise of the protagonists, high accuracy and fidelity in terms of specialised terminology for bird names would have been expected. However, even though the names of 41 bird species and 6 bird families were translated accurately, six species were translated inaccurately, some of which appeared repeatedly in pivotal longer scenes, enhancing the focus on the inaccurate translations. For two abbreviated names full names were used in German, though this deviation could be considered as promoting general understanding in a non-American audience. Two longer sequences with written text were not translated at all, one of which was in a key scene. Based on the setting of the movie, the inaccuracies lower the credibility of the characters. Furthermore, as the film topic deals specifically with birds it can be assumed that the audience attracted would have a certain expertise in ornithology and would thus notice the inaccurate terms used and the shifts of meaning. Consequently the instrumental and informative purpose of scientific translation was not entirely accomplished and dubbing did not become invisible. The inaccuracies were not based on some inevitable translational constraints and could have been avoided by viable strategies. An approach prioritising science (ornithology) over dubbing would be recommended in these cases.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Dr. Marion Winters for support and feedback during the editing of the original study, Erika Bird for revising the English language, Daniela Paul for further translational inputs and an anonymous reviewer who all contributed to the improvement of an earlier version of the manuscript.

Bibliography

- **Al-Hassnawi, Ali, R. A.** (2009). "Aspects of Scientific Translation. English into Arabic Translation as a Case Study," http://www.translationdirectory.com/article10.htm (consulted 15.05.2017)

- **Ascheid, Antje** (1997). "Speaking Tongues: Voice Dubbing in the Cinema as Cultural Ventriloquism." *The Velvet Light Trap*. 40: 32-41.

- **Attardo, Salvatore** (2002). "Translation and Humour: An Approach Based on the General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH)." Jeroen Vandaele (ed.), *Translating Humour*. Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 173-192

- **Barthel, Peter H. and Helbig, Andreas J.** (2005). "Artenliste der Vögel Deutschlands." *Limicola*. 19(2): 89-111, http://www.voegel-sachsen.de/downloads/Artenliste2005Deutschland.pdf (consulted 15.05.2017)

- **Chaume Varela, Frederic** (2004). "Synchronization in dubbing: A translational approach." Pilar Orero (ed.) *Topics on Audiovisual Translation*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 35-51.

- **Chaves, María José** (2000). *La traducción cinematográfica: el doblaje*. Huelva: Universidad de Huelva.

- **Day, Robert A. and Nancy Sakaduski** (2011) *Scientific English: A Guide for Scientists and Other Professionals*. Third Edition. Oxford: Greenwood

- **Díaz Cintas, Jorge** (2013) "Subtitling. Theory, practice and research." Carmen Millen and Francesca Bartrina (eds) (2013). *The Routledge Handbook of Translation Studies.* London/New York: Routledge, 273-287.

- **Fodor, István** (1976). *Film Dubbing: Phonetic, Semiotic, Esthetic and Psychological Aspects*. Hamburg: Helmut Buske.

- **Franco Aixelá, Javier** (2004). "The Study of Technical and Scientific Translation: An Examination of its Historical Development." *JoSTrans*, *The Journal of Specialised Translation,* 1, 29-49.

- **Hernandez Bartolome, Ana Isabel, and Mendiluce Cabrera, Gustavo** (2005). "New Trends in Audiovisual Translation; The Latest Challenging Modes." *Miscelánea: a Journal of English and American studies*, 31, 89-104.

- **Kahane, Eduardo** (1990-1991). "Los doblajes cinematográficos: Trucaje lingu ̈ıstico y verosimilitud." *Parallèles, 12. Chahiers de l'Ecole de Traduction et d'Interprétation.* Geneva, 115-120.

- **Linnaeus, Carl** (1735-1768). *Systema Naturae. Sive regna tria naturae. Systematice proposita per clases, ordines, genera & species*. Lugdunum Batavorum: Haak.

- **Martinez, Xenia** (2004). Film dubbing. Its process and translation. Pilar Orero (ed.) *Topics on Audiovisual Translation*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 3-8.

- **Montgomery, Scott** (2000). *Science in Translation*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

- **Nida, Eugene, and Taber, Charles** (1969). *The Theory and Practice of Translation*. Leiden: E. J. Brill.
- **Oddie, Bill** (2011). *Bill Oddie's Little Black Bird Book*. London: Portico Books
- **O'Sullivan, Carol** (2011). *Translating Popular Film*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- **Reiß, Katharina and Hans J. Vermeer** (1984) *Grundlegung einer allgemeinen Translationstheorie*. Berlin: Linguistische Arbeiten. De Gruyter.
- **Sanchez, Diana** (2004). Subtitling methods and team-translation. Pilar Orero (Ed) *Topics on Audiovisual Translation*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 9-18.
- **Svensson, Lars, Mullarney, Killian and Zetterström, Dan** (2011). *Der neue Kosmos-Vogelführer. Alle Arten Europas, Nordafrikas und Vorderasiens*. Stuttgart: Kosmos
- — (2011). *Collins Bird Guide. The most complete guide to the birds of Britain and Europe.* London: HarperCollins Publishers Ltd.
- **Swiss Ornithological Institute** (2016) Liste der Vogelarten der Schweiz, http://www.vogelwarte.ch/downloads/files/projekte/ueberwachung/sak/CH-Artliste_6.pdf (consulted 15.05.2017)

Filmography

- ***The Big Year***. (2011). Directed by Frankel, David. 20th Century Fox.
- **Ein Jahr vogelfrei!** (2011). Directed by Frankel, David. 20th Century Fox.

Websites

- **Avibase - The World Bird Database**. http://avibase.bsc-eoc.org (consulted 15.05.2017)
- **International Ornithologists' Union**. http://www.internationalornithology.org/ (consulted 15.05.2017)
- **World Bird Names**. http://www.worldbirdnames.org (consulted 15.05.2017)

Biography

Nadja Weisshaupt obtained her PhD degree on bird migration at the University of the Basque Country, Spain, in November 2016. In 2013 she earned her MSc in Translation and Conference Interpreting in the School of Management and Languages at the Heriot Watt University, UK. Currently she is working both as a freelance medical translator and as a project manager in bird conservation while preparing future research related to bird migration. She can be contacted at nw@nweisshaupt.net.

Appendix

Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4	Category 5
41 species (65%)	3 species (5%)	3 species (5%)	2 species (3%)	14 species (22%)
6 families (7%)	-	-	-	82 families (93%)

Table 1. Proportion of bird species and families in each category. Category 1: accurate translations; Category 2: minor errors; Category 3: major errors; Category 4: abbreviations; Category 5: untranslated text.

English name	Time	German dubbed name	Time
American Golden Plover	00:47:08	Amerikanischer Goldregenpfeifer	00:45:12
American Golden Plover	01:11:25; 01:11:37	Wanderregenpfeifer	01:08:30; 01:08:42
Audubon's Oriole	00:56:10	Schwarzkopftrupial	00:53:52
Bald Eagle	00:54:11; 00:54:23	Weisskopfseeadler	00:51:58; 00:52:06
Black-footed Albatross	00:17:47	Schwarzfußalbatros	00:17:03
Blue Grosbeak	00:30:26	Azurbischof	00:29:11
Blue Jay	00:15:21	Blauhäher	00:14:43
Blue-footed Booby	01:04:34; 01:05:48; 01:06:25	Blaufußtölpel	01:01:55; 01:03:06; 01:03:41
Clark's Nutcracker	00:01:40	Kiefernhäher	00:01:36
Colima Warbler	01:11:07	Colimawaldsänger	01:08:12
(Common) Raven	00:55:55	Kolkrabe	00:53:38
Egret, Owl, Pelican	01:21:51-52	Reiher, Eule, Pelikan	01:18:29-31
Flamingo	01:01:01	Flamingo	00:58:31
Great Grey Owl	01:17:28	Bartkauz	01:14:17
Great Spotted Woodpecker	00:21:25	Buntspecht	00:20:32
Greater Roadrunner	00:55:45	Wegekuckuck	00:53:28
Herring Gull	00:18:16	Kanadamöwe	00:17:32
Himalayan Snowcock	01:08:37	Himalaya-Königshuhn	01:05:47
Hummingbird	00:11:09	Kolibri	00:10:42
Kittiwake	00:15:57	Klippenmöwe	00:15:18
Loggerhead Shrike	00:40:06	Louisianawürger	00:38:27
Magpie	00:07:44	Elster	00:07:25
Mourning Dove	00:15:22	Trauertauben	00:14:44
Nutting's Flycatcher	00:06:13	Blasskehltyrann	00:05:59
Oriental Greenfinch	00:50:18	Chinagrünling	00:48:14
Owl	01:17:53; 01:25:05	Eule	01:14:42; 01:21:36
Peregrine Falcon	00:16:17	Wanderfalke	00:15:37
Pigeon	00:50:29	Taube	00:48:26

Pine Grosbeak	00:07:55	Hakengimpel	00:07:36
Pin-tailed Snipe	00:50:16	Spiessbekassine	00:48:12
Pomarine Jaeger	00:35:51	Spatelraubmöwe	00:34:23
Prothonotary Warbler	00:30:15	Zitronenwaldsänger	00:29:01
Quail	00:32:12	Wachtel	00:30:54
Red-shouldered Hawk	00:15:47	Rotschulterbussard	00:15:08
Red-tailed Hawk	00:10:44; 00:15:50	Rotschwanzbussard	00:10:18; 00:15:11
Rufous-capped Warbler	00:53:35	Rotkappenwaldsänger	00:51:13
Rustic Bunting	00:47:12	Waldammer	00:45:16
Sage Grouse	00:22:55	Beifußhuhn	00:21:59
Sandhill Crane	01:08:05	Kanadakranich	01:05:18
Seabirds	00:19:26	Seevögel	00:18:39
Snowcock	01:08:16-20; 01:10:04	Königshühner	01:05:28-32; 01:07:12
Snowy Owl	00:18:53; 00:53:37; 01:15:48; 01:26:51; 01:30:09	Schneeeule	0:18:07; 00:51:26; 01:12:42; 01:23:18; 01:26:27
Sooty Shearwater	00:01:04; 01:33:33	Dunkler Sturmtaucher	0:01:02; 01:29:46
Spruce Grouse	01:11:15; 01:11:22	Tannenhuhn	01:08:20; 01:08:26
Tamaulipas Crow	00:21:53	Mexikanerkrähe	00:20:59
Vultures	00:23:23	Geier	00:22:26
Western Screech Owl	00:15:40	Westkreischeule	00:15:01
Western Spindalis	00:53:21	Streifenkopftangare	00:51:10

Table 2. List of accurately translated bird names of category 1 with respective time stamps for the English and German movie.

English	**Time in movie**	**German dubbed versión**	**Time in movie**	**Accurate German name**	**Scien-tific name**
Raven	00:07:48	Rabe	00:07:29	Kolkrabe	*Corvus corax*
Goldfinch	01:33:54	Goldfink	01:30:02	Goldzeisig	*Carduelis tristis*
American Golden Plover	01:11:25	Amerikanischer Goldregenpfeifer/Wanderregenpfeifer	01:08:30	Amerikanischer Goldregenpfeifer/Prärie-Goldregenpfeifer/Wanderregenpfeifer	*Pluvialis dominica*

Table 3. List of category 2 cases (minor errors) indicating the English and the German dubbed version as well as the accurate German and scientific name with respective time stamps for the English and German movie.

English	Time in movie	German dubbed versión	Time in movie	Accurate German name	Scientific name
Great Grey Owl	00:06:08	Grosse Graueule	00:05:53	Bartkauz	*Strix nebulosa*
Pink-footed Goose	00:31:11; 00:33:06; 01:00:25; 01:01:42-01:02:03; 01:29:12	Pinkfußgans	00:29:55; 00:31:45; 00:57:56; 00:59:08-00:59:30; 01:25:33	Kurzschnabelgans	*Anser brachyrhynchus*
Rustic Bunting	00:47:00-00:49.05	Waldammer / Goldregenpfeifer	00:45:05-00:47:05	Waldammer	*Emberiza rustica*
Thrush	00:49:00	Goldregenpfeifer	00:47:00	Drossel	*Turdus sp.*

Table 4. List of category 4 cases (major errors) indicating the English and the German dubbed version as well as the accurate German and scientific name with respective time stamps for the English and German movie.

English (full name)	**Time in movie**	**Dubbed German name**	**Time in movie**	**Accurate German name**	**Scientific name**
Calliope (Calliope Hummingbird)	00:31:57	Sternelfe	00:30:39	Sternelfe	Selasphorus calliope
Flammer (Flammulated Owl)	01:12:41; 01:13:48	Ponderosaeule	01:09:42; 01:10:46	Ponderosaeule	Otus flammeolus

Table 5. List of category 4 cases (abbreviations) indicating the English abbreviation, the full English name, the German dubbed name as well as the accurate German and scientific name with respective time stamps for the English and German movie.

English	Time in movie (German)
Semi-palmated Plover, Spectacled Eider, Olive-backed Pipit, Eurasian Wigeon, Bean Goose, Bufflehead, Arctic Loon, Laysan Albatross, Hoary Redpoll, Bartailed Godwit, Lapland Longspur, Long-toed Sandpiper, Northern Shoveler, Smew	00:49:11-00:49:53 (00:47:11-00:47:49)
Hummingbirds, Auklets, Woodpeckers, Flycatchers, Ducks, Hawks, Sparrows, More Sparrows, Sandpipers, Robins, Tanagers, Swallows, Godwits, Chickadees, Finches, Vireos, Towhees, Warblers, More Warblers, Wrens, Grosbeaks, Eagles, Kingfishers, Terns, Thrashers, Owls, Nuthatches, Rails, Orioles, Buntings, Eiders, Pewees, Juncos, Blackbirds, Geese, Gnatcatchers, Grouses, Herons, Longspurs, Plovers, Kingbirds, Quails, Jays, Thrushes, Doves, Titmice, Pigeons, Vultures, Nutcrackers, Mockingbirds, Parakeets, Teals, Scaups, Yellowthroats, Sapsuckers, Waxwings, Wigeons, Redstarts, Larks, Turnstones, Egrets, Coots, Mergansers, Kestrels, Kites, Dowitchers, Cardinals, Gulls, Redpolls, Kiskadees, Bobolinks, Magpies, Pipits, Avocets, Cowbirds, Grebes, Oystercatchers, Dippers, Phoebes, Crows, Flickers, Ptarmigans, Pelicans, Albatross	01:34:41-01:38:32 (01:30:48-01:34:30)

Table 6. List of category 5 cases (other issues) of written bird families and species names in the order they appear in the English version with respective time stamps for the English and German movie.