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## **Introduction: Experimental Research in Audiovisual Translation – Cognition, Reception, Production**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In recent years, an unprecedented boom in experimental research conducted in the field of audiovisual translation (AVT) has taken place, marking a shift from individual, descriptive case studies towards an attempt at establishing some evidence-based truths. Using a combination of new methods and technologies, AVT researchers have embarked on the examination of various cognitive aspects governing not only the reception of translated audiovisual programmes but also the actual translation process behind practices like subtitling, captioning, dubbing, voice-over and audio description. This special issue aims to reflect this new trend, by capturing both research strands: reception and production. The paper starts with a discussion of the experimental and cognitive research shift in AVT studies, stressing the special, multimodal nature of audiovisual communication. A higher rate of replication and reproducibility of AVT research is also postulated, with suggestions of how to promote this. Finally, a summary of the contents of this special issue is presented, structured in three main parts: (1) conducting experimental research with the help of biosensor devices, (2) researching the behaviour of AVT professionals and (3) carrying out survey-based reception studies.

### **KEYWORDS**

Audiovisual translation, experimental research, subtitling, eye tracking, reception, cognition.

## **1. From descriptivism to experimental research**

Having existed since the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a professional activity, audiovisual translation (AVT) remained practically unexplored by scholars until the early 1970s. In recent decades, however, the complex semiotic texture of audiovisual productions has been of great interest to academics working in the field of translation studies, and the profession has grown and diversified ever since the advent of digital technology in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The changes has been so profound in our society that, for some, the audiovisual format has become the quintessential means of communication in the new millennium, and research on AVT is being heralded by many as one of the most dynamic and vibrant fields in translation studies.

A vast amount of research on AVT to date has been largely based on argumentation and descriptivism, with the result that, in the main, the empirical evidence that we have accumulated has not been necessarily directed towards evaluating and appraising the prescriptive conventions and protocols applied in the profession. Perhaps surprisingly, given the experiential research tradition found in media studies, the views of the audience have also been conspicuously absent in many of the academic

exchanges, which tend to ignore the practitioner's perspective too. Lately, however, a conscious effort to go beyond descriptivism has brought about a shift of focus, and researchers aiming to gain a deeper understanding of the audience's behaviour and attitudes towards the consumption of translated audiovisual productions have started to appropriate theoretical frameworks and methodologies from the social sciences in their own studies.

In their introduction to *Reception Studies and Audiovisual Translation*, Di Giovanni and Gambier (2018: x) delve further into this topic and argue that there has been "a thrust beyond descriptivism", with AVT research now exploring "the *before* and *after* of audiovisual texts, i.e. the linguistic, socio-cultural and cognitive processes involved in the creation of these texts as well as the forms and modes of consumption and reception." Acknowledging such momentum, this special issue focuses largely on AVT reception (the "after"), although some papers undertake the challenge of investigating the production of AVT too (the "before").

This shift away from descriptive analysis by some scholars has led to an unprecedented boom in experimental research being conducted in the field of AVT. Researchers from around the world have shown an increased willingness to rely on technology and statistical analysis as heuristic means to interrogate their object of study. To reach their objectives, they have started to implement a combination of new methods and technologies that allow them to examine the various cognitive aspects that influence not only the reception of translated audiovisual programmes but also the actual translation process behind practices like subtitling, captioning, dubbing, voice-over and audio description, to name but a few.

Despite being a clearly innovative drive in AVT, it can be argued that this evolution is a natural one that mimics similar developments in the wider field of translation studies, where cognitive approaches have been conducted since the early 1980s. Yet, the crucial difference between the cognitive research conducted in translation studies and that being carried out in AVT resides in the object of study. In the case of translation studies, the emphasis has been normally placed on the translation process, particularly on the behaviour of the translators themselves, as highlighted by Halverson (2014: 116), when she comments that "[t]he incorporation of cognitive approaches into the study of translation will lead to a reorientation of the field, implying a much more central position for the individual translator." Whilst trying to enlarge the scope of enquiry, Risku (2013: 675) seems to ultimately share the same opinion by focusing solely on the translator, when she argues that research in translation from a cognitive perspective has been "closely related to the ever-increasing process research in translation studies, which uses different methods to observe the actual chronological activity of translating by different groups of participants with different text types and different contexts." This, of course, is a rather

limiting approach as it forgets the importance of other participants in the communicative act, notably the receptors.

The same attitude of paying attention only to the translator can be detected in the work by Şerban (2018), who goes on to posit a list of three key interrelated aims that are the foundations of cognitive approaches to translation studies: (1) to understand the cognitive capacities of the agents involved in processes of translation, meaning translators or translators-to-be; (2) to build better theories and models of translation; and (3) to develop more efficient methods and programmes for translator training. These three goals can be easily applied to the context of AVT, where a fourth one would need to be added if we are to depict a full picture of our area of knowledge, namely, (4) to understand the cognitive capacities of the agents involved in the reception of the translations. Of a similar opinion are Kruger and Kruger (2017: 71), who argue that the focus of cognitive translation studies has been so far largely on the production of actual translations, that is, on the “‘causes’ of translation within the translator’s mind” rather than on the cognitive processing of the translation recipients, i.e. the ‘effects’ of translation.

As already pointed out, scholarly activity has multiplied in recent years and it is no exaggeration to claim that studies on reception and process, in that order, have become pivotal in current academic exchanges dealing with AVT, with the figures of the viewer (d’Ydewalle and Bruycker 2007; Ghia 2012; Perego *et al.* 2015; Szarkowska and Gerber-Morón 2018) and the practitioner (Beuchert 2016; Hvelplund 2017; Orrego-Carmona *et al.* 2018) becoming the focal points of the investigation. Studies on practices such as subtitling and dubbing coexist with investigations on media accessibility and show a shift of focus from the textual idiosyncrasies of the original and the translation to the effects that the ensuing target text has on the viewers. These aspects include different indicators of cognitive load, various types of immersion, the role of visual memory and the impact of subtitle display rates on viewers cognition, to name but a few.

To gain a deeper understanding of the audience’s behaviour and attitude towards the consumption of translated audiovisual productions, the early pioneering works in our field were based on the use of traditional methods of reputed validity in the social sciences like observation of participants as well as the utilisation of questionnaires and interviews (Fuentes Luque 2000), which continue to be favoured by some of the scholars included in this volume (Bardini; de los Reyes; Moores; Perdikaki and Georgiou; Ramos Rojo). However, studying complex semiotic composites as heterogeneous and multimodal as audiovisual productions calls for the use of more innovative techniques, taking advantage of recent technological developments – such as eye tracking, electroencephalography (EEG) and other psychophysiological measures – that allow the researcher to delve deeper into the minds of the audiences, the practitioners and the trainee translators. In AVT, the coexistence of the acoustic and the visual channels,

through which verbal and nonverbal information is concurrently conveyed, appeals to various senses and leads to a level of immersion on the part of the receptor that is different from other experiences such as reading a written text. It is the very nature of the audiovisual, moving text that calls for and justifies the application of interdisciplinary methodologies and analytical approaches that borrow from other disciplines such as psychology, neurolinguistics, deaf studies, blind studies, media studies and artificial intelligence. The challenge, of course, resides in the fact that to meet the goals of such an encompassing approach requires the combination of multiple, different theoretical frameworks and experimental tools that makes it difficult for individual researchers to master. For this reason, the current research landscape is both varied and in constant flux, and projects exploring the cognitive underpinnings of the manifold AVT practices are increasingly relying on technological innovations and involving teams of researchers rather than individual scholars, which used to be more common in our discipline.

Over the last decade, the use of interdisciplinary methods for empirical research, and with them the recourse to specialised hardware and software, has opened up new and exciting avenues for better understanding the perception and reception of audiovisual texts in translation and, ultimately, for improving the quality of the end product and the training of new professionals. To bolster current translation debates, particularly when dealing with multimodal products, more room has to be made to allow for interdisciplinary perspectives that will help scholars gauge and theorise the invasive role of technology. Of particular note in this attempt to measure human behaviour is the application of physiological instruments such as eye trackers, frequently used in other fields like advertising and social sciences, to the experimental investigation of AVT. Of all the tools being incorporated into the research of AVT, eye tracker is perhaps the most popular one and is well represented in this special issue as part of the experiments documented in the articles by Romero Fresco, Flis *et al.*, Liao *et al.* and Ragni. Some of these devices have helped scholars to move away from speculation to observation of subjects. In addition to instruments like eye trackers, a wide array of other biometric sensors are also being used in this new research ecosystem such as galvanic skin response devices (see Matamala *et al.*, this volume) to measure participants' levels of arousal as well as webcams and facial recognition apps to record and conduct facial expression analysis that inform researchers about respondents' basic emotions (anger, surprise, joy, etc.), help monitor their engagement, and assess if they are expressing their attitude in observable behaviour. Electroencephalography (EEG) and electrocardiograms (ECG) are also being tested to monitor brain and heart activity respectively, which can provide helpful insights into cognitive-affective processes. These biometric and imaging methods, in combination with more traditional approaches such as questionnaires, interviews and computerised tests, have the potential of yielding results of an applied nature that the industry can easily factor into their *modus operandi* and academic institutions can embed into their

curricula design. For instance, reception studies with viewers as their main target can help assess whether audiences are satisfied with the current state of affairs and whether their needs and gratifications have evolved with time and, if so, how best to reflect these variations in real practice.

Innovation on this front has so far been primarily spearheaded by academic and commercial researchers working in the field of media accessibility, who are currently leading the way in user-based studies. As claimed by Di Giovanni (2016: 60), this may simply be “a natural tendency, as both the research and the practice of media access for the sensory impaired are deeply grounded in the knowledge and involvement of the end users.” Whatever the reason, as Díaz Cintas (2019: 222) argues, “the fact remains that this flurry of empirical experimentation taking place in SDH and AD sharply contrasts with the scarcity and narrow scope of the reception studies being conducted in the more traditional translation areas of dubbing and subtitling.” Notwithstanding this imbalance, the number of studies so far carried out is still very limited and they normally include a rather small number of participants. Because of their complexity and onerous nature, large-scale empirical experiments aimed at evaluating the reception of dubbing or subtitling, whether intra or interlingual, are thin on the ground, even though their outcomes could prove very fruitful and could feed back straight into professional practices and processes. Deciding on a subtitle presentation rate that would satisfy most if not all viewers is clearly too utopian a goal, but we can get slightly closer to it by testing and garnering information provided by the audience themselves, in an empirically objective rather than purely subjective manner.

In addition to the need for conducting innovative research from this perspective, it would also be academically healthy for the discipline to verify and double-check the validity of any results obtained by other investigators, by replicating some of the experiments with other audiences, in other languages but in identical or very similar conditions and following the same methodological steps.

## **2. Replication**

Experimental research not only allows us to test new professional techniques and practices but it also helps us verify long-held assumptions regarding fundamental issues in AVT, which may have been posited by practitioners, researchers and/or organisations. In this respect, the Open Science Collaboration (2015: 943) explicitly stresses the fact that “scientific claims should not gain credence because of the status or authority of their originator but by the replicability of their supporting evidence.” For authors like Koole and Lakens (2012: 609), replication is necessary to ensure the reliability of research findings and it is ultimately “essential to scientific progress.”

Against this backdrop, Ioannidis (2005: 0696) had already raised the issue of an “increasing concern that most current published research findings are false”, which a few years later seemed to have been confirmed, to some extent, by the Open Science Collaboration (2015). Indeed, their Reproducibility Project demonstrated that – as opposed to the original studies reporting significant results in 97% of cases – only 36% of the replication studies produced results that were statistically significant. However, the high rate of non-replication does not necessarily mean that the original study was faulty and a number of different reasons may be behind the fact that the replication does not produce the same result as the original study, as discussed further in the article by Flis *et al.* contained in this volume.

In this debate, Stevens (2017) and Patil *et al.* (2016) discuss a useful distinction between two similar but diverging concepts: replicability and reproducibility. The former is about re-doing a given experiment and collecting new data. When replicating a study, the scholar targets the same research question(s) by conducting a new experiment and hopes to achieve a result that is consistent with the original study. Reproducibility, on the other hand, consists in “re-performing the same analysis with the same code using a different analyst” (Stevens, 2017: 1). In other words, a study can be replicated while its results can only be reproduced. When replicating a study, scholars do not expect to obtain the same numerical outcome, as this will vary given the natural variability of different population samples. Reproducing the study results, however, should yield exactly the same figures as the original study.

In this respect, replication alone, however desirable, is insufficient to verify scientific discoveries. For reproducibility, we need to ensure research integrity and transparency as well as reusability of scientific data. This can be done by publishing data sets in open access repositories, together with data analysis scripts, raw data and study protocols. An important role is played by journals and publishers, who should support and encourage the publishing of supplementary materials and guarantee that the studies they accept are well-designed, follow correct statistical analyses and are based on sufficient sample sizes. They also ought to require full, as opposed to selective, reporting of research findings, including not only *p*-values, but also effect sizes and confidence intervals. This way of proceeding is particularly important in the case of audiovisual translation, which is a young and budding area of research.

Admittedly, experimental research has not been at the core of translation studies or audiovisual translation. In the case of the latter, in particular, investigation has traditionally relied on individual, descriptive case studies aimed at finding general trends and not so much on reception or cognitive approaches. Yet, now that experimental research has started to be conducted in AVT, the need for replication studies becomes more pressing

if the results yielded by these investigations are to be accepted as valid by the wider community.

### 3. Contributions to this issue

Contributions to this special issue of the *Journal of Specialised Translation* relate both to the 'before' and the 'after' of audiovisual texts. While most contributions can be classified under the umbrella term of 'reception research' (the 'after'), some of them are focused on the production stages (the 'before').

#### 3.1. Conducting experimental research with the help of biosensor devices

The articles under this theme focus on testing the reception of audiovisual translated materials with the help of eye tracking technology. In experimental research on AVT so far, eye trackers dominate when it comes to the most frequently used technological devices, usually exploited in conjunction with more traditional methods like questionnaires and interviews.

The article opening this section, entitled "The dubbing effect: an eye-tracking study on how viewers make dubbing work", is a study on the cognitive process undergone by viewers when watching dubbed productions. In his eye-tracking exploration with Spanish and English viewers, **Romero Fresco** reports on what he names the dubbing effect: an eye gaze strategy unconsciously activated by Spanish viewers to avoid looking at the mouths of the onscreen characters when consuming dubbed films. When compared with to English viewers watching the original English version of a film, Spanish viewers spent considerably less time looking at the actors' mouths and focused more on the eyes. This effect was observed in close-up scenes of dubbed films, and only in those that contained dialogue exchanges. The eye-tracking analysis was complemented by data on the participants' comprehension, sense of presence and self-perception of their eye movements when watching these clips. When asked about this behaviour, Spanish participants admitted not being aware of this negative mouth bias. For Romero Fresco this kind of behaviour may be reflexively triggered as a result of imperfect synchronisation in dubbing. He also attributes this dubbing effect to Spanish viewers' habituation to dubbing and their unconscious attempt at suspending their disbelief and becoming immersed in the story world depicted in the film.

The paper by **Flis, Sikorski and Szarkowska**, "Does the dubbing effect apply to voice-over? A conceptual replication study on visual attention and immersion", is a conceptual replication of Romero Fresco's study on the dubbing effect, but conducted on the practice of voice-over and with Polish viewers. The authors set out to investigate the potential existence of the 'voice-over effect', similar to the one observed by Romero Fresco. If a lack

of synchrony between the characters' lip movements and the dubbed translation may be responsible for Spanish viewers' avoidance of looking at mouths, the argument behind this article is that a similar effect should be observable in the case of voice-over into Polish, where the technical dissonance between the original and the translation is far greater than in dubbing. Relying on eye tracking and a set of immersion and enjoyment questionnaires, the authors tested a group of Polish viewers watching the same clip from the film *Casablanca* as participants in the original study. Unlike in Romero Fresco's study, the results of this experiment show that Polish viewers did not avoid looking at the characters' mouths when watching the excerpt from the voiced-over version of the film, therefore, not replicating the results of the original study. The gaze pattern of Polish people watching the voiced-over film was similar to that of English people watching the original version in the initial experiment, i.e. both groups spent more time looking at characters' eyes in scenes with no dialogue compared with scenes with dialogue, as opposed to the Spanish people for whom the tendency was reversed.

In their paper on "The impact of monolingual and bilingual subtitles on visual attention, cognitive load, and comprehension", **Liao, Kruger and Doherty** address the challenge of studying a type of subtitles that is gaining ground in mainland China: bilingual subtitles. In this scenario, text is presented on screen in two languages simultaneously, i.e. Chinese and English, where the former is a translation of the original dialogue while the latter is a transcription. Attempting to disentangle the impact that soundtrack and different types of subtitles, bilingual and monolingual, have on viewers' perception, the authors draw on an analysis of eye movements and self-reported questionnaires to investigate Chinese viewers' visual attention distribution, cognitive load, and overall comprehension of video content, under various experimental conditions, with and without subtitles. By studying different combinations of intra- and interlingual English and Chinese subtitles, with English soundtrack, they found that viewers' visual attention allocation to the Chinese subtitles was more stable than to the English subtitles and less sensitive to the increased visual competition in the bilingual condition, which, they argue, can be attributed to the language dominance of their native language. Despite their high degree of redundancy, bilingual subtitles – consisting of one line of English text and one line of Chinese text – were found to be more beneficial than the condition with no subtitles.

The fourth article in this first group presents the results of an eye-tracking study and is entitled "More than meets the eye: an eye-tracking study on the effects of translation on the processing and memorisation of reversed subtitles." The author, **Valentina Ragni**, taps into the relatively under-researched territory of reversed subtitling – a mode in which the original audiovisual product is in the native language of the viewer and the subtitles are in the foreign language – and its application to foreign language learning. Relying on eye tracking technology and a memory post-test

consisting of multiple-choice questions on verbatim recognition of foreign language (L2) wordings as heard in the foreign audio, she investigates how literal and non-literal translation strategies affect the retention of the L2 subtitles among a group of English native speakers learning Italian at an upper-intermediate level. Her findings demonstrate that the reversed subtitles were processed, a large percentage of L2 input was retained after a single exposure to the video, and translation-specific factors are liable to affect the learners' comprehension skills.

The last paper in this theme, "Electrodermal activity as a measure of emotions in media accessibility research: methodological considerations", has been authored by **Matamala, Soler-Vilageliu, Iturregui-Gallardo, Jankowska, Méndez-Ulrich and Serrano Ratera**. It focuses on the use of electrodermal activity (EDA) as a new biometric measure that can be employed in experimental studies in AVT. The authors begin with the presentation of a theoretical framework and the definition of a raft of key concepts that are related to the study of emotions. They then discuss how EDA can be harnessed to measure the emotional reactions of viewers watching audiovisual programmes that have been translated, and propose a set of protocols to be borne in mind when designing experiments with EDA, including information on participant selection, stimuli preparation, data collection devices, experimental procedure and data analysis. Special attention is paid to the best way in which research materials can be adapted so that they can be used with participants with disabilities and a note is made on how to combine this biosensor device in conjunction with other psychophysiological measures, such as facial electromyography (fEMG) or heart rate, as well as with qualitative methods such as interviews.

### **3.2. Researching the behaviour of AVT professionals**

The second part of this special issue consists of three papers exploring the role of the professionals working in the field of AVT and focuses on three distinct AVT practices, namely, pre-recorded subtitling, live subtitling through respeaking, and audio description.

In the first of these contributions, "Investigating the relation between the subtitling of sensitive audiovisual material and subtitlers' performance: an empirical study", **Perdikaki and Georgiou** present the results of an online survey conducted with a group of 170 professional and amateur subtitlers from different countries around the world. The ultimate goal of this survey was to elicit the subtitlers' attitudes and emotions towards various types of sensitive audiovisual materials, such as abuse, war, terrorism, gender stereotyping, racial discrimination, and pornography. The authors also look into the ways in which the materials may affect the subtitlers' performance and the nature of the emotions that they may trigger. Although the vast majority of respondents declare that their subtitling performance is not affected by the nature of the sensitive materials, a substantial number of participants acknowledged, in the open-ended question, that they

sometimes experience physical reactions, such as nausea. The most frequently felt emotions when translating this type of material were sadness, anger and disgust. Other respondents stated their way of coping with this sensitive material was to take more frequent breaks while subtitling, to avoid looking at the screen or to hurry up through the sensitive parts. As for the impact on the actual output, some respondents admitted toning down the language when translating, in particular terms and expressions denoting strong language or racial discrimination. The authors advocate the inclusion, in translator training curricula, of the topic of translating sensitive audiovisual materials, so that practitioners can learn about strategies that will help them handle the emotional impact triggered by such programmes.

“Fostering access for all through respeaking at live events”, written by **Moore**, centres on the topic of granting access to d/Deaf and hard of hearing viewers at unscripted live events, such as museum tours, Q&A sessions and public talks. The paper begins with a brief discussion of the audiovisual landscape, with a focus on quality in respeaking and current provision in the sector. After presenting a bespoke training programme, the scholar outlines the user and provider expectations for such a service. The second part of the paper is devoted to the quality of respeaking at a series of research events. By focusing on the professional performance of a group of respeakers and the quality of their live subtitling output, the author elicits the opinions and expectations of some of the stakeholders through surveys and focus groups held after a number of live events organised across the UK. The assessment of the subtitles indicate that the quality attained for the most part meets, and frequently exceeds, the benchmark of 98% accuracy set for live TV subtitling. Latency is similar to that seen on television, yet remains an area for further consideration.

In their translation process study, under the title “Analysing the AD process: creativity, accuracy and experience”, **Ramos and Rojo** focus on the extent to which some of the psychological traits of the describers can affect the creation process of audio description scripts. Assuming that creative intelligence is one of the main competences required of professional audio describers, the authors conduct a study on a group of Spanish describers, in which they explore the interconnections between creativity, accuracy of description and professional experience. To measure the describers’ creative intelligence, the scholars resort to a validated creativity test. The describers were then asked to create AD scripts for four highly poetic scenes. Their performance was analysed in terms of the accuracy and subjectivity of the ensuing texts. The results show that the more experienced describers are also more creative, less subjective and more accurate when it comes to drafting audio description scripts.

### **3.3. Carrying out survey-based reception studies**

The third and final part of this special issue contains two articles that explore the viewers' reception of audiovisual productions with the help of surveys. In the first of these two contributions, "Straight from the horse's mouth: children's reception of dubbed animated films in Spain", **de los Reyes Lozano** presents the results of a study in which he explores a group of children's reactions to some of the translation strategies regularly adopted when dubbing animated films into Spanish. Using a large sample of over 160 participants from two age groups (Year 4 and Year 7), the researcher tests their comprehension of various lexical and visual items, including cultural references, colloquial language, educational content and songs. Data were then collected through a questionnaire adapted to the participants' level of cognitive development and the analysis was based on two independent variables: the participants' year in school and the number of previous viewings of the films. The results show that, in line with expectations related to their different developmental stages, older children tend to achieve higher scores than younger children. They also prove that children do not seem to have much trouble understanding cultural, educational and musical content that is specific to the source culture and is kept in the target text. Interestingly, having previously watched the films does not appear to be a determining factor in children's ability to identify these elements.

The last contribution, entitled "Film language, film emotions and the experience of blind and partially sighted viewers: a reception study", provides an excursus into the practice of audio description, traditionally considered an objective depiction of the images on screen, where audio describers should refrain from interpreting the information contained in the audiovisual production. Acknowledging that film experience is a sensual, cognitive and emotional encounter between film and spectator, **Bardini** sets off to test three different AD styles with a group of forty five blind and partially sighted Catalan viewers: one conventional AD and two interpretative styles (cinematic AD and narrative AD). After exposing the participants to a short film and asking them to complete a questionnaire, the results of her experiment show that although conventional AD grants satisfactory access to the film story, emotional aspects expressed through film language are rendered more effectively with an interpretative AD approach, i.e. cinematic and narrative, as they resulted in higher arousal and joy experienced by viewers. According to the scholar, this may point to a shift in AD practices, where objective descriptions will give way to more interpretative ones, thus offering the blind and the partially sighted people a more "enjoyable, immersive and engaging film experience."

#### **4. Concluding remarks**

Despite its relative youth in scholarly circles, AVT has certainly come of age academically in recent years and can be considered to be a blooming branch within the wider discipline of Translation Studies, both from training and research perspectives. One of the defining traits of this evolution can be

said to be the widening in the range of topics and debates that are being discussed nowadays by investigators. If early studies on the field used to focus on the singularity and relative autonomy of AVT, interdisciplinarity and cross-fertilisation are the new way forward in our technologically driven society. The traditional focus of the early studies tended to favour the description of the various AVT practices as well as the analysis of the role played by language, the challenges encountered when carrying out the linguistic transfer in concrete cases dealing with humour or cultural references, and the translational strategies activated by the practitioners to overcome them. With the passing of the years, the scope of enquiry has widened significantly and one of the driving forces taking centre stage in our field is that of experimental research. Fostered by the potential offered by methodologies and heuristic tools borrowed from other disciplines, academics are embarking on novel and promising ventures whose ultimate aim is to shed light on the cognitive processes that lie behind the production and reception of audiovisual translation.

This special issue is a testament to such a trend and the studies compiled here provide a stimulating and thought-provoking account of some of the most representative themes that are currently being researched in the field of AVT, while at the same time also pointing to new avenues of potential research.

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