JoSTrans
The Journal of Specialised Translation

Zárate, Soledad (2021). *Captioning and Subtitling for d/Deaf and Hard of Hearing Audiences*. London: UCL Press, pp. 154. Open access PDF: £0.00; paperback: £20.00; hardback: £40.00. ISBN 9781787357105 (PDF), 9781787357112 (Pbk), 9781787357129 (Hbk).

In the era of digitalisation, access services are key to ensuring everyone's right to partake in all areas of life, including cultural life. The crisis caused by the pandemic has accelerated such a digitalisation context and, especially in the case of persons with sensory disabilities, has exacerbated shortcomings in communication access. At the same time, new media consumption formulae arise on streaming platforms and social networks, services strive for personalisation, and this broadens the type of potential users of access services traditionally intended for persons with disabilities: hearing users may decide not to listen to the soundtrack of an audiovisual product while travelling without headphones on public transportation or while putting a baby to sleep, as has been argued in the literature (Agulló 2020: 57, Matamala 2019: 172). Therefore, the present context is ideal for the publication of the monograph *Captioning and Subtitling for d/Deaf and Hard of Hearing Audiences* by Soledad Zárate (University College London), fully devoted to one of the most relevant access services, i.e., subtitling for the d/Deaf and hard of hearing (SDH).

Zárate's book adopts a didactic approach to SDH. This fills a major gap in the specialised literature — SDH had hitherto been explored in research and discussed in books about generic subtitling, but there was a lack of guides delving deep into the specific features of SDH in a comprehensive manner. There are three strengths in Zárate's work which are worth underlining: a) the theoretical explanations of this audiovisual translation (AVT) modality contained in the book make extensive use of the results offered by recent research; b) the author's own professional and research experience is noticeable across the monograph, since all aspects are carefully illustrated with examples, which are sometimes the author's own; and c) each chapter is accompanied by discussion points proposed as exercises, which makes the book useful for self-taught trainees as well as for lecturers interested in introducing SDH activities in their courses.

The book is structured into six chapters. Chapter 1 starts with a brief account of the origin of subtitles in the early 20th century and frames them within AVT. To do so, the author introduces basic notions such as the components of the audiovisual text, which serves her to explain how, in SDH, the "translation of only the verbal elements [of an audiovisual text] meets the requirements of the audience halfway and it is therefore not completely satisfactory" (5). The chapter goes on to discuss relevant legislation that has paved the way for the introduction and spread of SDH in different countries. The section covers international treaties such as the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), as well as directives and regulations specific to some territories, such as the European

Audiovisual Media Services Directive and the European Accessibility Act, or the Digital Economy Act (UK), among others. The chapter closes with a description of the professional profile of SDH subtitlers working both in recorded and live events, as well as with notes on their training needs. An interesting idea raised at this point is the fact that, ideally, a team of hearing and d/Deaf or hard of hearing subtitlers should work collaboratively in translation projects (14). As the author notes, this is not typically the case. Therefore, specific training beyond traditional subtitling competence is needed to ensure that SDH professionals are familiar with the needs of target users.

Following this idea, Chapter 2 is perhaps the most necessary for readers familiar with generic subtitling, but with no prior experience in SDH. It profiles the main recipients of SDH. The chapter is useful to understand the different standpoints of persons with deafness, who may or not consider themselves to be "members of the Deaf community" or "disabled", as well as to gather basic information demonstrating the enormous heterogeneity intrinsic to the group of persons who may be called "deaf". Specifically, the chapter reports on the language(s) they use, and on the main causes, types, and degrees of deafness. In all cases, explanations are accompanied by clear tables and figures taken from existing specialised literature which are helpful to understand medical concepts which may be unknown to a reader with a Translation Studies background. Likewise, a list of the most frequent electronic devices used as hearing aids is offered in the chapter. Important notions in the framework of accessibility studies, like the social and the medical models of disability, are also discussed. Although the social-medical models' dichotomy has been transcended in the literature since the 1980s, its inclusion in this book is pertinent, since it is still considered to have played "a pivotal role" in the debates leading to the CRPD (Degener 2016: 2).

Chapter 3 is devoted to the linguistic features of SDH. Zárate reflects on the advantages and disadvantages of verbatim or edited subtitles for users with different degrees of hearing loss. The author concludes that "unedited subtitles may validate what is being heard [by non-profound deaf users], while a mismatch between the audio and the subtitle at a comfortable reading speed may be more confusing" (40-41), which speaks in favour of verbatim subtitles. She acknowledges that verbatim subtitles are not always an option, nonetheless, and goes on to discuss reduction strategies – namely condensation, omission, and reformulation –, providing examples in which varied linguistic features may be excluded in SDH. Likewise, guidelines on how to deal with non-standard language varieties are offered, and trainees are recommended to weigh the value of these varieties in each case. A comprehensive list of the orthotypographical conventions normally adopted in SDH is provided and, again, accompanied by a clear summary in the form of a table (51-52). Finally, segmentation and line-breaks in captioning and subtitling are also explored in this chapter. In this regard, it is worth mentioning that this is the first part of the book that draws a clear

distinction between captioning and subtitling. In previous chapters, "captions" are essentially mentioned as the American word for SDH (2, 11). The only hint provided about what distinguishes both is to be found in a sentence discussing the models of disability ("The provision of captions in a theatre or SDH at the cinema is supportive of an inclusive model") (22). A definition of both terms in the initial pages of the book would have been helpful. Not all readers may be familiar with these terms, which may have different meanings in different varieties of the English language and have been used vaguely in the literature.

Chapters 4 and 5 deal with technical aspects of SDH. Chapter 4 provides recommendations which are also relevant to generic subtitling, regarding image and subtitle synchronisation, reading speed, gap between consecutive subtitles, shot changes, layout, positioning on screen, and file formats. All these aspects are presented by considering results of recent reception studies conducted both by user organisations and academic research. In Chapter 5, the technical requirements specific to SDH are reviewed, namely means to identify speakers on screen (colour, label, dashes, or hyphens) and strategies to convey non-verbal elements, such as accents or marked intonation. The two last sections of Chapter 5 are devoted to music and sound effects. A major contribution of these sections is the way in which the author argues against the generalised "misconception that d/Deaf and hard of hearing audiences do not enjoy music" (75). She reinforces her ideas derived from professional practice with links to videos published on social networks which show d/Deaf persons sharing their own views on the matter. The chapter also includes a report of technological devices that now allow persons with hearing loss to experience sound in a tactile way or through the visual channel.

Chapter 6 is about captioning theatre and subtitling live events. Its subsections offer an overview of current practices, illustrated with images, with a focus on the United Kingdom, the United States, Spain, and Australia. The author writes about her professional experience as captioner in the Puppet Theatre Barge in London and shares examples of icons used for speaker identification in children's plays, music, or sound effects. An interesting point in the chapter is the reflection that "[w]orking in a captioned performance that is subsequently poorly attended by d/Deaf and hard of hearing people can be rather disheartening" (104). This idea has been raised repeatedly in fora which bring together representatives of the cultural industry and researchers working on access services. As a response, Zárate proposes a set of practical measures to market access services, thus suggesting that it is also part of the accessibility experts' duties to ensure that accessible products reach their intended audiences, mainly by means of direct contact with user organisations. She also provides a summary of actions that need to take place before, during, and after the performance. Regarding the latter, she highlights the importance of gathering feedback from users, i.e., running ad hoc reception studies as

a step towards improving quality in future performances. In one of the book appendices, she offers a questionnaire template for that purpose.

Zárate's monograph is a valuable contribution to both Translation Studies and Accessibility Studies since it deals with SDH as an AVT modality in its own right and describes its intended users in a thorough manner. For that reason, it is likely to become a reference textbook in these fields. The fact that an open access version of the book is available from the University College London Press website is also remarkable. This makes the book more easily reachable by different stakeholders incorporating access services in their cultural projects, which speaks of the potential social impact of the publication.

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